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Christ the indweller : an attempt to trace the practical bearing of the doctrine of the inward Christ on

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CHRIST THE INDWELLER.

CHRIST THE INDWELLER:

An Attempt to Trace the Practical Bearing of the Doctrine of the Inward Christ on Common Life.

BY

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"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."—"I am Alpha and Omega."—"Lo, I am with you always."—"Apart from Me ye can do nothing."

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Dedication.

TO

MY WIFE,

TO WHOM I OWE MORE THAN I CAN EXPRESS,

AND WHO HAS BEEN MY INSPIRATION

IN MANY DARK DAYS.

PREFACE.

THIS book is a very humble attempt to apply a doctrine that has fascinated the writer, to ordinary life. There is no treatment of sin in the following pages, except incidentally; but if there be any truth in the apostolic position—"that Christ may dwell" in our hearts, by faith; that Divine Indweller exercises an expulsive power, which banishes the positive presence of sin, and so strengthens the nature He indwells that, instead of missing the mark, or trespassing on forbidden ground, or failing of God's purpose—it becomes quick to discern, and empowered to resist, the onslaught of sin and temptation, and gradually grows up into the likeness of the Redeemer. If this book shall help any feeble Christian, or suggest high possibilities before any commonplace nature, or express the Sacramental character of ordinary life—it will justify its existence.

TOR VICARAGE, TORQUAY,
8th March, 1902.

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"In the secret of His Presence how my soul delights to hide!
Oh, how precious are the lessons which I learn at Jesus' side!
Earthly cares can never vex me, neither trials lay me low;
For when Satan comes to tempt me, to the secret place I go.

"When my soul is faint and thirsty, 'neath the shadow of His Wing,
There is cool and pleasant shelter, and a fresh and crystal spring,
And my Saviour rests beside me, as we hold communion sweet,
If I tried, I could not utter what He says when thus we meet.

"Would you like to know the sweetness of the secret of the Lord?
Go and hide beneath His Shadow; this shall then be your reward.
And when e'er you leave the silence of that happy meeting place,
You must mind and bear the image of your Master in your face."

(*St. Mary's, Southampton, Appendix to the "Lichfield Church Mission Hymn-Book."*)

CHRIST THE INDWELLER

CHAPTER I

WHERE IS GOD?

THE search after God is universal. From man's childhood, all down the educative discipline of the ages, there has risen the cry of God's infants for the Father. It is the spiritual faculty that differentiates man from the rest of Creation. No one is without this spiritual faculty. And where it is allowed to express itself, its longing is definitely voiced. "Show me Thy face." "Tell me Thy Name." "Who art Thou, Lord?" "Who is He that I might believe on Him?" These are typical yearnings. Ever, from the dark shadows of the night of ignorance, has arisen the cry of the divine sonship within man. And it is probable that no

human spirit has been without its periods of silence, out of which the deepest longing of the soul has risen. It is the tendency of *things* to invade this silence with rout and babblement; second causes bewilder us. And we fail to get behind and below second causes to the great First Cause, Whom Jesus has revealed to us as Father. What a vast mistake this world seems to the man who has never penetrated below external things to the eternal purpose of the Everlasting Father-spirit, which is a purpose of love!

A little love and much hatred, the merciless competition of life, the war of conflicting interests, the presence of sin, pain, misery, so many possibilities apparently killed by lack of opportunity, so many promises unfulfilled, the tyranny of *things*, the wicked "flourishing like a green bay tree"; this is the chaos that confronts us —this is the mystery that bewilders us. Is there no explanation? I myself am the greatest problem of all, devil and angel at the same time. A naughty child with yet an earnest desire to be good, rent and torn between opposing appetites, avid for passing pleasure and ambitious of goodness; blown and tossed by every wave of circumstance. I want an explanation of these things. There must be some subtle meaning

below all the misery of the world and the individual. Who will tell me the meaning of life? Who will save me from the curse of pessimism, the creeping paralysis of doubt? I have never found the explanation of things in things. I have never gone deep enough until I have got below things, until I have got back of all phenomena to the First Cause. And even then, after I have gone back and back, I find the idea of the great First Cause removed so far from the struggle of life that I get no satisfaction from natural religion. Yet it is part of the very constitution of my nature that I must believe in a God; but what is God like, what is His attitude to me, and my relationship to Him? The colourless essence of pure Being does not satisfy, the universally diffused Spirit is too vague for me. I want no passionless Demiurge, I crave for a visible embodiment of the universally diffused Spirit; my human affections desire a Person whom I may love and know—with Whom I may hold communion.

The fact of the Incarnation is God's answer to the spiritual longing He Himself has put within man. The prologue to S. John's Gospel is the profoundest philosophy and the truest theology, and it satisfies the searcher after truth. If human hearts have for thousands of years been

longing for a higher revelation of God, God has been longing for a closer communion with man. In the fulness of time, when the old faiths of the world had become effete, when a weary agnosticism benumbed many, when hope stood on tiptoe waiting for it knew not what, when some new "Word" was longed for and expected by the far-seeing; God identified Himself with man, and entered into blood-relationship with him in the Incarnation. Human eyes have seen the visible embodiment of God. Jesus, our Elder Brother, our Saviour, the second man, in blood-relationship with us as the Head of our race, in personal relationship with us as Saviour, Friend, God, is the answer to those world-old longings of the lost children of God for their Father. Christ has definitely said, "No man cometh to the Father but by Me," and "He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father." In the work of Jesus ("the Son of Man" as He loved to call Himself), in His Life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension, the salvation of man has been ideally finished. This ideal is to be accomplished and actualized in the individual. But how? Jesus, as true man, had to die and leave the world, but with divine insight and protective love for those whom He was to leave behind Him, He provided for a closer union of

S. John xiv. 6.
S. John xiv. 9.

them with Him than was possible in the days of His flesh. The coming of the Holy Spirit secured, as it were, the perpetuation of the Incarnation. So many who believe the facts of the life work of Jesus, think of Him as being now removed from this world, being out of touch with the personal life of men, think of Him as being separated from us by the vague distance of infinite space, and by the lapse of nineteen centuries of time. It is not so. To God space and time are not. What is once a fact is always a fact. Hence we are not surprised to find that Christ has His Incarnation now, as truly as in the days of His Flesh. The work of the Holy Spirit is to "introduce Christ," not in a vague way, but actually into the spirits of men. And thus even the believer's physical body is a shrine of Deity—a "Temple of the Holy Ghost," whose work is the formation of Christ within, our Ruler, Saviour, Life of our life. The Incarnation is a present fact, of which our deepest natures are confident, and the divine light within cannot be hid.

1 Cor. vi. 19.

We cannot get away from God. God is everywhere, therefore here. It is impossible to get away from Him; and we thank Him for that! Long before the Advent, God had taught that truth to the writer of Psalm cix., where in a

passage of sublime grandeur he sang the Omnipresence of God. Apart from inspiration the whole passage is one of the most magnificent in the world's literature ; and read in the light of Advent and the great day of Pentecost, it becomes burdened with unutterable blessedness. No doubt this writer wrote deeper truths than he knew. That God knows all, and is everywhere present ; that is the theme.

" O Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me,
Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising,
Thou understandest my thought afar off.
Thou searchest out my path and my lying down,
And art acquainted with all my ways.
For there is not a word in my tongue,
But, lo, O Lord, Thou knowest it altogether.
Thou hast beset me behind and before,
And laid Thine Hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me ;
It is high, I cannot attain unto it.
Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit ?
Or whither shall I flee from Thy Presence ?
If I ascend up into Heaven, Thou art there ;
If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, Thou art there.
If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea ;
Even there shall Thy Hand lead me,
And Thy right Hand shall hold me.
If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall overwhelm me,
And the light about me shall be night ;'
Even the darkness hideth not from Thee,
But the night shineth as the day :
The darkness and the light are both alike to Thee."

Can it be true? Dare we venture to believe it? If it be true, and we are persuaded that it is, it shows us the dignity of our redeemed humanity. It reveals to us that we are sons of God—heirs of God, inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven, in present possession of that divine inheritance which is within us *in posse*, and which life's education under the direction of the inward Christ is daily making ours *in esse*. St. Paul's mind was saturated with the idea of the re-incarnation of Christ in the lives of His children. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." Rom. viii. 9.
"I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; *and yet* no longer I, but Christ liveth in me." Gal. ii. 20.
In Ephes. iv. 14 *et seq*. St. Paul reveals his deepest desires for the Ephesian Christians in an intercession that is matchless in its beauty. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every fatherhood in heaven and on earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inward man; *that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith;* to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,

and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God." (Revised Version.) In his Epistle to the Colossians he calls the Church the body of Christ (i. 24), and he uses later on the pregnant phrase, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." When urging the Corinthians to self-examination he writes, "Know ye not as to your own selves that Jesus Christ is in you, unless indeed ye be reprobate?" And from the tenour of these and many other passages in the writings of St. Paul, we gather that he held that in reality and truth Jesus Christ is the Indweller. These are more than rhetorical flourishes and empty phrases—they represent a living truth.

2 Cor. xiii. 5.

And our Lord Himself promises to enter into His disciples, to be the source and inspiration of their life. "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." "If a man love Me, he will keep My word: and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." "I in them." The conviction of St. Paul and the direct promises of Christ are not vague theories or empty words, but living facts: and facts that have reversed the judgments of the world, taken the sting out of sorrow and

S. John xiv. 19.

S. John xiv. 23.

S. John xvii. 23.

death, and brought life and immortality to light.

The presence of the Inward Christ has quenched pessimism and despair, by arousing undying hope. It is Christ within us Who makes heroes; Who teaches us that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the *things* that he possesseth. It is Christ's Presence that consecrates all life, and sanctifies all sorrow, and appeals to and educes the best in man; it is the Christ within that subdues the animal in man and evolves the Angel. It is because He Who is the embodiment of all the fulness of the Everlasting Love, dwells within man's spirit, not as a Guest, but as a Master, that we are sure that all things work together for good, that an unsuspected purpose of Eternal Love rules and over-rules all events. And it is because we know Him Who is true to be our possession, that we can leave many questions unanswered, being sure all the time that there is no difficulty that has troubled the minds of men, no sorrow that has torn human hearts, that has not a full and satisfactory explanation in the eternal love of Him Who knows the end from the beginning; in the truth of Him Who is both Alpha and Omega. While we are limited and conditioned as we are, while

we are still in God's kindergarten, there must be much that transcends our powers of understanding, much that fills us with awe and wonder. The craze after definition so inbred in the Western mind, has fettered and cramped the ideal, and striven to reduce Theology to the position of an exact science; thereby making it mechanical, and robbing it of its chief glory —spirituality.

We cannot know everything; but we can all love—the tiniest child can love, and from this love will spring trust in the Divine Person Whom we love. And though at times we only "faintly trust the larger hope," our trust is the trust of love; and we *know*, though we cannot see *how*, that "somehow good will be the final goal of ill," and that that "far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves" is being slowly but surely evolved by the Presence of Jesus, Who has a re-incarnation in every Christian's body.

The Incarnation is not a fact accomplished 1900 years ago, it is an eternal fact, present within us now. I am not my own, He belongs to me because I belong to Him—Christ and I are indissolubly joined. And from this basal truth springs the necessary consequence that my very body is consecrated, a vehicle through

which flows the Divine Life. What a dignity! What a responsibility! When I realize the dignity I shall be true to the responsibility. With what other, larger, eyes shall I behold the world, how generous ought my judgments to be! How emancipated shall I be from the thraldom of mere externalism! I shall see that instead of killing my nature it must be consecrated, that instead of running away from the world I must live in it, since God has put me there to bless and help it; my life will be full of the preservative qualities of salt. My life will radiate the inward light; it will be the Jesus-Life. My work in the world will be His work of salvation and comfort. I shall be guided, impelled by His Presence. I shall be inspired by His Spirit. I shall feel the divine necessity to cast the spell of God over human souls. My life will be "all sweetness in the Presence of the Lord." To spend and be spent for others will be the passion and enthusiasm of the Divine Presence outworking itself through my personality. The only man who has the right to smile is the man through whose face beams the smile of Jesus. The consecrated life will be full of winsomeness and attractiveness. Religion will be serving Him from love, not from fear, nor from covetousness.

S. Matt. v. 13.

S. Matt. v. 14.

1 Cor. ix. 16.

Liberty from all thraldom, all narrowness, all intolerance, belongs to me because of the Presence of Jesus within. I can dare to hold up my head and live as a King's son, since the life of God is my life. The difficulties of my environment will be turned into the means of advancement in the highest sense. My conscience will be clear, my affections fixed, my will stimulated, and every department of my complex being will be saturated and interpenetrated by the Divine Life. My will will be His Will, my desires His desires, my very life His life. And all this, not in a moment or two of rapt ecstasy, but as the very atmosphere which I breathe.

Phil. i. 21. For me to live will be Christ, the Wisdom of God and the power of God. The vows of God are upon me. I am lost, and yet I find the true meaning of my being in the stream of the eternal purpose of God's love. My very

Rom. vi. 13. members are yielded as "instruments of righteousness unto God." I myself lie open to the play of the Will of God, to do His Will is my object in life. Only as a bond-slave of the Christ within, absolutely His, body, soul, and spirit, can I find my true emancipation. Myself will be just a tool in the hand of the Master-artist, which He will need to use in the shaping of

some Divine idea out of my little environment of our common humanity. So I will renew my allegiance to Him.

"My spirit, soul, and body, Jesus, I give to Thee,
A consecrated offering, Thine evermore to be."

CHAPTER II

WHAT AM I?

"THE proper study of mankind is man," said Pope. "Know thyself" was the legend inscribed over the portico of the Temple of Delphos. And yet how few people really desire to know anything as to the build of their nature! And one cannot try to think of that without feeling that a Builder is implied. One who made us, aye more, one who is making us, if the revelation of God as abiding Spirit, if the promise of Christ as indwelling Presence be true. There are two vast mysteries which I cannot fathom, but of which I may know enough to make me full of awe and wonder, they are God and I. What is the true psychology? I think we get it in 1 Thess. v. 23, where S. Paul with deliberate intention speaks of man as a trinity in unity. Nor is the order

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in which the Apostle mentions the threefold nature of man undesigned. It was a word of inspiration, agreeing with all revelation. Spirit, soul, and body. These are more than mere rhetorical phrases. There is profoundest philosophic truth in them. The order is reversed in popular phraseology, which speaks of body, soul, and spirit; and is there not a rather sad significance in this method of speech and thought? Men begin at the wrong end, and it is a confession of the tyranny of man's sarkical nature that he should think of it first; and yet the common order of using these words renders possible the doctrine of development. It seems that in the Bible the terms spirit and soul are used interchangeably, but there is a real distinction between them. Of all three parts God is represented as the Creator. The Bible tells us that man's body was made of matter, the highest form of the animal creation, and it is significant that the human embryo passes through all the stages of animal existence, and one remarkable thing is mentioned of man in this condition —"Male and female created He them." Is it not possible that the sexes were not as yet differentiated, that man was bisexual? The presence in man of rudimentary organs belonging to woman, and in woman of rudimentary

organs belonging to man, seems to point to this. The making of woman is a subsequent development, subsequent even to the mysterious outbreathing of God's Breath into man's nostrils, whereby we are told he became a living soul. The order, and we can trace design and progression in it, is as described above, unless there be no order but a confused repetition of the same act. So it stands in Genesis, Man the chief of animals and their lord, bisexual, Gen. i. 26, 27. Man elevated and endowed with a living soul, Gen. ii. 7. The sexes differentiated, Gen. ii. 18–25. Then came the discipline of trial under which man fell, sin and shame that have tainted the individual and the race ever since; and yet underlying it all, indomitable hope and yearning upward of the spirit of man towards redemption and re-creation, fulfilled and answered in the fulness of time by the humiliation and exaltation of the Son of God for the Atonement of the race and the individual, and the establishment of a higher and more blessed relationship of man with God than was possible in the innocent, untried ignorance of the race.

But as to the Pauline analysis of man into the trinity in unity; the spirit, soul, and body, that make up the personality of man in his present

condition on this earth; the order is the order in which the nature of man ought to be regarded. It is the order of importance. Dean Farrar says that this prayer of S. Paul in 1 Thess. v. 23 is "the earliest passage in which the trichotomy of our nature is recognised in Scripture" (*Messages of the Books*, p. 184); and these definitions of the terms have been made by Trench—*soma*, "body," *psyche*, "the entire human life and faculties," *pneuma*, "the divinely inbreathed spirit, the highest region of life." And it is surely full of suggestion that in the first letter that S. Paul wrote, when he was in the full flush of spiritual and mental vigour, we get so plain a recognition of the trichotomy of man's nature. All his other Epistles work from the same fundamental principle. S. John adopts it; and in his Gospel, which represents his mature thought and experience, guided by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he speaks of man's spirit, and says that there can be no worship of God Who is a Spirit but in "spirit and in truth." And in his doctrine of Baptism he enunciates the fact that the spirit of man is born of the spirit of God, as his flesh is born of the flesh. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews also distinguishes between soul and spirit, "for the word of God is quick and powerful, . . . piercing even to the dividing

S. John iv. 24.

S. John iii. 5, 6.

Heb. iv. 13.

1 Pet. iv. 6. asunder of soul and spirit." S. Peter with practical earnestness urges the necessity of living unto God in the spirit : " For this cause was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." From these important passages we learn that the realm of our being in which we can approach the Eternal is the Spirit. It is that part of our nature by which we instinctively apprehend realities, by which we can serve and worship God in reality and truth. It is the very inmost consciousness in man, that part which death cannot touch. In it we are able to apprehend not phenomena only, but invisible realities, to know God, to discover His Will. It is that part which should dominate the soul and body, and, when quick and lively, and in direct touch with the Inward Christ, it interprets invisible realities in external life. It is intuitive, God's Spirit acts directly upon it, apart from the reason which belongs to the soul, and is sanctified by being used spiritually. Faith is the response of man's spirit to God's Spirit, the means whereby we *know* God, though we may know that we know without being able to give a mathematical demonstration as to *how* we know. Reason is not the highest endowment of man, but faith.

Reason is limited to our mental power, faith has no limits, it dominates the inferior natures, but its seat is in the spiritual nature. And so far from faith, that faculty of the spirit, being a vague and unpractical thing, it influences the whole life and brings a man's soul and body into accord with the Eternal purpose. It is only by the spiritual faculty that we can at all see "Him Who is invisible," or understand Him. The intellectual faculty cannot fathom God, but where reason fails faith succeeds. There is no necessary opposition between reason and faith. In the normal nature one informs the other, and each works harmoniously side by side. When once we have clearly grasped the fact that the spiritual nature of man is that part which may get into direct contact with God, we shall be prepared to discern the truth that is so often obscured by the popular phraseology which confuses spirit and soul. But my spirit, my deep inmost essential being, is not all. It is the highest part of me, but I am in a world of things and phenomena in which I have a very definite part to play. If there is one part of my nature that can see the Invisible and in which I am united to God, there is another world-side of my nature. This world-side may be divided into two parts —soul and body. But about the use of the

Heb. xi. 27.

Heb. xi. 1.

term soul there is the confusion we have noticed, in current popular phraseology, and also existing in the Old Testament language. Here the terms soul and spirit are often used interchangeably, for the simple reason that the distinction had not been made in its nicety, while yet the distinction existed really, and was felt and expressed by one word, soul. Under the term soul we include the intellect and affections, and say unhesitatingly that the soul belongs to the lower part of a man's nature. Daily research into nature reveals the probability that soul and body are one. Its affinity is with the body, not with the spirit, and this is by no means the same as saying that it is evil. To the spiritually quickened man soul and body are interpenetrated, elevated, dignified by the domination of the spirit; but the soul can die with the body, the soul is not *per se* immortal. It may be saved, and the whole of the education of a man in this world, psychic and somatic, may find its fruition in the permanent development of his inmost nature. If it do not, if the lessons of life be unlearned, they are lost, and the soul and body that have lost them are involved in their loss. A man may be intellectually cultivated to the height of possibility, and his body may be most completely trained; and yet unless there be

some final directing power exercised over soul and body by this spirit, he may be a clever and accomplished scoundrel. A man's will may be strengthened by exercise until it becomes dominant over the wills of his less developed fellows, but it can be a strong will and a bad will at the same time. A man's affectional nature may be enlarged, and yet he may be essentially selfish. A man may be physically trained, and yet he may use his bodily strength brutally. Soul and body need a guide, and the guide is the spirit, in touch with God, and using soul and body as instruments for its manifestation. All these, spirit, soul, and body, make up one man, the complex personality that belongs to me, my Ego ; and the conclusions of the intellect, the exercise of the emotions, and the actions of the body, are all brought to the bar of a something "within," that is my deepest nature, my spirit. Spiritually I am directly acted upon by God, psychically and somatically I hold my commerce with man. Each man is a link, a nexus, between God and the creation. The evil is that men as a rule are contented with perfecting soul and body, and neglect the loftiest part of the being, the spirit. Yet the unsatisfied discontented condition of the most intellectual man with the merely intellectual is the movement of the deeper life within, the divine

hunger and thirst that all knowledge, all *things*, cannot satisfy. As long as we spend all our care upon the world-side of our nature we shall never be satisfied, for the starved spirit has a voice that will make itself heard in our quiet moments. A man reaches the zenith of his intellectual powers and they then decline, the perfection of bodily strength is soon passed and it fails towards dissolution ; but, unlike these, the spirit of man is endowed with everlasting youth, and, regal in its sway, when we bestow the slightest attention upon it, it sweeps into its service all physical and psychic endowments, and sits a queen, having absorbed all that is of real value from the experience of soul and body, while it watches with equanimity, nay, with undimmed hope and yearning, the gradual decay of world-ward powers, being conscious of the youth of immortality, and earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with other less limited conditions than those of earth. S. Paul prayed that spirit, soul, and body might be sanctified by God and preserved blameless unto the "*parousia*" of Jesus Christ,

2 Cor. v. 1, 2.

> "That one far-off divine event
> To which the whole creation moves."

We do not belong to ourselves. Our bodies and souls as well as our spirits belong to God,

by creation, by redemption, and by sanctification. Sanctification is God's part of the work, consecration is man's part. While we try to keep any part of our nature from God, we are really robbing Him and robbing ourselves. There slumbers in each of us a possible angel; and by sanctification on God's part and consecration on our part, it is being carved out by the daily life of joy and sorrow we live down here.

That man misses the meaning of life and is blind to the dignity that belongs to him, who cultivates the world-side of his nature and neglects the Godward side, the spirit, and by neglect the spirit of man is dwarfed almost to the vanishing point. Such action is like a man treasuring the husk and neglecting the kernel.

If we could only in some way get men to think of what they are, of what life is and means! If men would only *think* at all, instead of vegetating, and accepting life without a question! If we could only get them to ask themselves the riddle, "What am I?"; and then set themselves to work on the discovery of their being, what a stirring in the stagnant pool of life there would be! what a movement among the dead bones of conventional religion!—a movement of life until those skeletons should rise up, an exceeding great army of the Lord God. If

men would only not hush, but listen to the deep consciousness that *is* somewhere within them, telling them of deeper, higher, diviner things than they have ever attained; if they would pause in their pride of intellect, and from satisfaction in what they *do* know, would think of what they do *not* know, of the "more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in their philosophy," then there would be hope for them. It is difficult for us, who are occupied with *things* as children are with toys, now pleased, now angry, now tired, now fretful, to think that things seen are "temporal," and therefore can by no means satisfy our eternal instincts. It is no *thing* that can satisfy us. God, the Person of the Inward Christ only, can do that. The realization of the most lofty dream inspired by Æstheticism would leave something yet to be desired. The very words satiety, *ennui*, are eloquent with meaning. But the difference between gratification of the soul or body and of the spirit is this; that gratification in the former case leaves discontent behind it, an unpleasant taste; while in the latter the spirit is gladdened and guided too; but there are always higher heights of attainment before it. It knows no such thing as satiety, no such feeling as dissatisfaction. "My soul thirsteth

2 Cor. iv. 18.

Ps. xlii. 2.

for God, for the living God." The more you have the more you want, but there is no limit to the satisfaction, but the hunger; the little bit of God within us is hungry, and God only can satisfy God.

Yet here are you and I full of opposite attractions, God-driven and earth-held, reaching after the infinite and illimitable, yet trying to satisfy ourselves with the very finite and temporal. Knowing that we cannot know absolutely here, surrounded by the finite, hoodwinked by sense, yet knowing that we can know certain things. With, for us English at least, the Oriental mysticism and spirituality really alive, but so often led by the clamour of the Western mind for detail. We are full of wonder and awe and reverence, until commerce with the world blunts the finer susceptibilities of the child-heart, or initiation into conventional make-believe opens our eyes to the false and mean; never to be quite deceived by things and shows and externalities, but when most artificial and superficial, feeling still that there is an unutterable meaning that underlies all life. We search and explore the world of mind and matter for the sublime and beautiful, forgetting that God the Beautiful enwraps us with His Presence, embraces us with His Love, indwells us with His Spirit. Sad are

we because we forget that it is when we first seek "the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness," that all these things are added unto us. We try to rest in things of beauty that are only given us to be instruments and media below which we are to discern the Ideal Beauty. One of the saddest bits of biography is that little incident in the life of Heine. He last went out in May, 1848. He felt paralysis and loss of eyesight coming on fast. He had an intense passion for the beautiful; ultra-refined and æsthetic perceptions. In the streets of Paris into which he made his painful way with two sticks, (for his carriage had been appropriated to make part of a barricade,) he was borne along by the crowd; at length he disentangled himself and entered the Louvre, and went to the "goddess of beauty, our dear lady of Milo." "There he sat long at her feet, he was bidding farewell to his old gods. He had become reconciled to the religion of sorrow: tears streamed from his eyes; and she looked down at him, compassionate but helpless: 'Dost thou not see, then, that I have no arms and cannot help thee?'" An hysterical, over-wrought picture, one may say, and yet what a deep meaning below this agony! Would that he had seen the Everlasting Arms, waiting to help him!

S. Matt. vi. 33

Yes, there is a feeling of kinship in man to all that is great, even while he does much that is weak and little. Before him he sees boundless possibilities that may be rendered attainments by cultivation, or made pitiful failures if he neglects them; with a passion for pleasure and happiness for which God substitutes blessedness if man will accept it. What are all these upward yearnings but the spirit of man leaping to meet the Spirit of God from Whom it comes? God gives Himself to us to help us, the Inward Christ by Whose power we may make our aspirations realities. And the very deepest desire for communication with Him, Jesus anticipated when He gave for all the earthly existence of His Church "the most comfortable Sacrament of His Body and Blood." In this He condescends to all parts of our nature: to the spirit, for the core and heart of the Sacrament is His Presence, without which it were a mere external rite; to the soul, for the loftiest intellect finds here an abyss in which it is lost; and to the body, for the very fleshly senses have their part in that Holy Mystery.

It is when the God-intended balance of life is recognized, and the spirit is seen to be the chief part of our complex personality, that soul and body are consecrated, yea the very body itself is

seen to be sacred. Well has man been called a compound of dust and Deity : pity that the dust is made so much more of than the Deity ! But when the body is yielded as an instrument of righteousness unto holiness we can say truly with Novalis, "I touch heaven when I lay my hand on a human body." The lower natures, soul and body, are servants, not masters ; and the man is a slave to his lower nature who recognizes nothing higher within him than his intellectual powers, or the passionate cravings and appetites of his bodily senses. "Our wills are ours to make them God's," and so are our bodies. And thus it happens that we are told that our very bodies are the Temples of the Holy Ghost Who dwelleth in us ; the shrines of Deity ; the veil within which lives and moves and acts and works, Christ the Indweller.

Body, soul, and spirit, that was God's order in the building of man. Spirit, soul, and body, that is the order in which I have to regard myself.

M. Naudin, the eminent French botanist, maintains the correctness of the Mosaic account of the creative stages of man's development. He holds that originally there was a *protoplasm* which, under the influence of the evolutive force, became *proto-organisms* which contained the

rudiments of kingdoms. Taking that which has been the source of the mammalia, ever since its appearance there has been within it, essentially and potentially, all the mammalian order, including the human. He appeals to embryology in support of his theory. These proto-organisms were asexual. The Mosaic account is scientifically correct, according to M. Naudin. The Bible says man was made of clay, this M. Naudin says was the original "primordial blastema." He was, in this stage, neither male nor female: "It is from this larval form of mankind that the evolutive force effected the completion of the species. Adam had to pass through a phase of immobility and unconsciousness, very analogous to the nymphal state of animals undergoing metamorphosis." This state of unconsciousness is called in the Bible the deep sleep of Adam, and the differentiation of the sexes was accomplished, the Bible says, by God taking a rib of Adam during his deep sleep and making Eve. This process resembled the germination and budding of cellular life. Substitute the term *bisexual* for *asexual*, and the rest of this theory seems to hold. The future foretold by Christ, when they "neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels which are in heaven," seems to imply

St. Mark xii. 25.

that in the resurrection life, there is an union of sex characteristics. Even now the ideal man is the *gentle* man, or a man who unites the gentleness of the woman with the strength of the man. M. de Quatrefages attempts to dispose of this interesting theory by calling it unscientific, and suggests that there is no room for evolutive force, or rather, "second causes," unless simply to retard or favour the production of types which have been "immutably determined beforehand," and were, *in esse*, in the primordial *blastema.* (*The Human Species*, De Quatrefages, p. 124, 4th edition). But surely behind the "evolutive force" we are justified in expecting an Evolver, of whose designs and of whose presence the "evolutive force" is the *modus operandi.* We do not object to the study of "second causes," but we claim the right to get behind them, if possible. And the opening words of Revelation, "In the beginning, God," supply a link that is missed if we are exclusively occupied with the works, and neither admit nor search for the Worker. What is called the conflict between religion and science does not exist. But it appears to exist, because theologians have been perhaps over-conservative of old ideas, have lacked the power of absorbing newly discovered truth, and too

often have lacked the desire to welcome any new fact, because it conflicted with preconceived ideas. On the other hand, too often a specialist in some region of scientific research will consider that his accurate observation on scientific matters gives him the right to dogmatize on religious matters. On the one side, scientific theology ought to be elastic, and certainly ready to welcome anything and everything that may be discovered by research in the realm of physical science. On the other side, it has perhaps been a defect in those whose lives have been absorbed in scientific research, to the exclusion of other departments of their nature, to dogmatize from the standpoint of physical discovery, upon truth as a whole. Surely physical research is not finished, we have not learned *all* truth as yet. When our knowledge is no longer in a transition stage, but complete, it will be time enough to dogmatize ; and when knowledge *is* perfect, if ever that be possible to limited minds and capacities, we feel persuaded that the apparent conflict between religion and science will be recognized as only a nightmare that frightened ignorant children, and that we shall get back again upon the solid rock of that first statement in Revelation, "In the beginning, God."

To the reverent mind all truth is a projection of Him Who is Truth; nothing is "common or unclean"; nothing is deserving of contempt, not even the little sac of jelly-like bioplasm; out
Rom. xi. 36. Col. i. 17. "of Him, and through Him, and unto Him are all things," and "by Him all things consist." We refuse to substitute for *God* the abstract idea "*evolutive force*," but we rejoice to recognize in "evolutive force" the way in which our Father works. It is not evolutive force that presides, it is God; and you may call His presiding what you will as long as you allow us to retain our hold on Him. As the Bishop of Ripon said recently in Westminster Abbey: "If we could see the great progress of the past, and watch from age to age the presiding love and wisdom at work, and then see the splendour of human life dazzling us with the magnitude of their perception—then, when I look back on these strange forms of the past, I have no longer a feeling of contempt, for these are predicative of something greater. This is the golden stairway, and as I watch it go up, I know that on the summit are forms climbing up to their angelhood." There are other instruments than the scalpel and microscope. There are other powers of our manhood than the power of accurate observation. There is the horizon of the Infinite

and Eternal as well as the tiny circumference of an object-glass. There is the infinitely great as well as the infinitely little. The tendency that impels men to become specialists is narrowing in its nature, and needs guarding against its bias towards exclusive littleness. Darwin regretted that the over-exercise of one part of his nature had atrophied another.

CHAPTER III

THE CHURCH

Overruling, directing, co-ordinating the diverse elements of humanity, and the conflicting thoughts of men, the divine Spirit has been and is at work, brooding as at the dawn of creation over Chaos, and evolving from it His own divine idea of Kosmos. We have thought about man in his separate individuality, and we do not desire to over-emphasize that individuality. Individualism may be exaggerated until it issues in pure selfishness. Such will be the inevitable result unless it be counteracted by collectivism. The individual derives his rights from his membership in the organism of humanity. He arrives at his higher privileges simply when he recognises that he is a member of the living organism of the Church, as a member of that body of God. The doctrine of exclusive indi-

vidualism has been exploded in all departments of life, social, economical, spiritual. Men in temporal concerns have demonstrated the value of combination, and have developed the corporate feeling. We are discovering that we are not straws floating, the sport of eddies and winds, upon some irresistible stream, left in a sad aloneness to sink or swim, to be hurried on, or stranded on the shore of some backwater of life, with no other interests but selfish ones that concern our individual happiness. We feel the throb of blood-relationship, we are impressed by the claims of others; besides the welfare and easement of others, our own rights become the sublime right of self-sacrifice. Self no longer rules —the rights of others are stronger than the rights of self. The body politic claims our efforts; the nation calls upon us for sacrifice, which we willingly make—for "the cause," whatever it may be that holds us in thrall, we are willing to give our all. To help on some importunate movement, we contribute all our individual powers. Our money, time, thought, are claimed, and we yield willingly to the claim. And what is true of the Family, the Trade Guild, the Nation, is true of the Society called the Church.

It is wonderful to note the divine principle of continuity at work, by means of the method of

evolution, throughout the great human movements. We are now concerned with the spiritual movement of man, controlled, directed by the Holy Spirit of God. Here and there as an indication of how He has worked, we have recorded in the spiritual history of man, the Bible, how God chose one man, then a family, then a nation, and when these had fulfilled their being and borne their witness, Christ gathered together the materials for the Church, whose birthday was that great Day of Pentecost.

Note the limitations of the earlier channels, the narrow sympathies of Noah, of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the rigid and overbearing attitude of the Hebrew nation, failing in its one strong point, the fact of its being the subject of not natural, but supernatural, *i.e.* spiritual selection. That nation in spite of defective backsliding had yet been true to the idea of the Theocracy, but "in the fulness of the times" it failed from narrow bigotry and lack of sympathy, and the Church, the divine Society, was started, a society grander than the nation, world-wide in its sympathy, world-wide in its mission, embracing with motherly arms all the children of men, who by the divinely appointed Sacrament of Baptism are admitted to that Universal bosom. Nothing half so grand could have been conceived of by

the mind of man. Henceforth there are no barriers of nationality or attainment between man and man. The accidents of birth, or colour, or generation, or station, make no barrier to the claim of that divine Society. To this all were welcome. Through her the message of love from the Father's heart is voiced in every language under heaven. And men only find the true conservation of self when that self is re-generated, absorbed, and made instinct with new life, by being merged in the Church of Christ. What then in brief is the Church? It is more than a society, it has with truth and insight been called a living organism, composed of individual members. It was started supernaturally. By the union of inchoate elements through a living Spirit, the individuals were merged into a body, the life of which was the very Spirit of God. It is the Spirit of God alone Who gives life to that Body, and there is but one Body, with many members. The creative act was God's, the Church's charter of incorporation is divine in its origin. Human hands had no part in that creative work; and surely it should kindle enthusiasm for the Church, that we can trace her origin beyond the Reformation, and the chaotic crudeness of that period, beyond the formal ecclesiasticism of the middle ages to the fountain

head, to the Apostolic band, gathered in the Upper Room on that great day of Pentecost.

It is true that the Church of Christ is hindered in her divine mission by her "unhappy divisions." The elements of disruption seem to have torn her asunder. But surely there is an underlying essential union between all who, in the pregnant phrase of St. Paul, are "in Christ Jesus." The spirit of faction had arrived at an acute stage even in the Apostolic age—as we see from St. Paul's first letter to the Corinthian Christians. In that Church faction was opposed to faction, and party spirit caused illwill and made the partisans forget the sublime fact of their unity in essence. It was as though the members of a body should fight among themselves for the pre-eminence, and forget that it was their living union in one body that gave them any value. From this letter of St. Paul we see that it has happened in the simplest age of the Church, that Christ Himself should be treated as the head of a party.

The Church to-day suffers from the same disruption and spirit of faction; and that these are alien from her nature, and destructive of the very purpose of her being, men are becoming more keenly aware. It is so easy to utter an ultimatum instead of issuing an eirenicon. To

anathematize is so much less difficult than to convince.

One indication of a better time to come is to be found in the universal regret for the disruption, and the universal desire for reunion. But reunion will never come as the result of the imposition of a cast-iron uniformity in externals. The essential union *is* within the Church, if the Holy Spirit be within her. And the Spirit's voice is making itself heard on all hands. Men are drawing together, Christians are beginning to discover that the essential union, an union of divine life, which binds them together, is greater than the things that separate them. It is always so much easier to destroy than to construct. And it is the destructive tendency that has done such profound damage to the Church throughout her chequered history.

Yet, the thoughtful Christian, whose faith is that God is stronger than the Devil; and the Spirit of God, stronger than the spirit of faction; cannot but be filled at once with sorrow and hope. With sorrow, because of the opportunities lost to the Church by reason of her divisions—and with hope, because sooner or later the will of God shall be accomplished—and the prayer of Jesus Christ answered, "that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in

S. John xvii. 21.

Thee, that they may be one in Us, that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me."

"*That the world may know that Thou hast sent Me.*" Is not this a divine definition of the very purpose of the existence of the Church? By the love, by the essential union of Christians, to produce conviction in the minds of men; to convert a hostile world, not by anathema, not by argument, not by force, but by love. And we cannot but see how this very purpose of the Church has been hindered by the emphasis of fashions in external things that change in each age—by the party-spirit, which ever evokes the worst passions in the hearts of men, and produces an embittered hostility. Without any sacrifice of principle, it is possible to have the wider truth of the essential unity of the divine Society loom so large before us that the differences melt away, and the spirit of party, against which we have an Apostolic command, is seen to be utterly subversive of the essential nature of the Church.

A dead level of uniformity! God forbid! It is not uniformity we want, but a deeper realization of the *unity* that is really ours. Uniformity is synonymous with mechanical monotony. Let us rather strive after the recognition of the Catholicity of the Church of

Christ, a Catholicity that conserves and welcomes the distinct individuality of every part—of every individual ; that is enriched by the individuality of the men who share the common life of the Holy Spirit of God. It is in God's life that we are united. An uniformity imposed from without would be merely external—and a cast-iron superficiality. A living union from within would find an appropriate outward expression ; but that expression would not be uniformity—it would be love triumphing over differences.

It is high time that we awoke to the purpose of our incorporation into the body of Christ ; that we did the work, and fought the fight against evil and ignorance and materialism and indifference. For it was in order that the Gospel might be preached in all the world that the Church was commissioned and endowed with the Holy Spirit of God as her life.

S. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

There is one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, and there is only one Church ; and the Church is not an aggregation of individuals forming a mass of separate units—but a living body, of which men are members, each member sharing a common life—a body with the life of God thrilling through every member.

The Church is not a human society, but a Divine society ; her life is the life of God ; her

commission is Divine, given her by the very lips of her Head, Jesus Christ ; and therefore her claim is not the claim of an august human corporation, but of a Divine organism. It is only an exaggerated individualism, (which regards its own broken ray of truth as the whole solar light,) that frustrates her purpose.

Membership in the Church is not a question of personal liking, or of private preference. No man can incorporate himself—he must be incorporated. God only can make us members in His Church ; and this is done by God the Holy Ghost in the "Sacrament of incorporation" —where God claimed us, and set His sign upon our very flesh, as visible evidence of an invisible fact.

Those who dwell upon the things that separate, lose the magnificent truth and power of *union* with all the other members of the divine organism of Christ's body—they miss the very idea of the Church.

Let us learn from our failures, and turn our defeats into lessons. Surely one of the most healthy signs of the times is the earnest endeavour to realize the Corporate feeling. It finds expression in commerce, in social life, and it is now the strenuous endeavour of Christians to reach it in spiritual things. Men are longing to

attain it ; and their very longing is a promise that it will be attained. Men desire it, and it is the will of God.

Within the Church in recent times these two movements have taken place. In the great Evangelical revival of the last century the relation of the individual to God was the prevailing idea, and a splendid heritage of consecrated life was the result. God's Holy Spirit was waking the Church from her lethargy. That revival was the tingling of the Divine life through every individual member. Its work was done ; and each member being awake, began to feel its relationship to the Body as a whole, and the development was carried on by the Holy Spirit through the great revival of the idea of the Church as a living organism, which was accomplished by the Oxford Movement. This great movement restored the idea of the Church to its proper position, and counterbalanced the tendency to excess of the individualistic idea, which could not fail to be the result of the Evangelical revival.

There is profound truth in both : they are parts of one whole ; excess of either to the belittlement of the other is fatal to truth. In short, the process of development by which God's Holy Spirit has led the world seems to

have been this: first the individual, then the family, then the tribe, then the nation, and since the birthday of the Church, the world. For we are to think that the Church is both an end and a means. She exists to be the visible embodiment of God's invisible thought, her purpose is to evangelize the world, to do the work of her Lord by the Spirit of the Lord Who indwells her. She holds the deposit of all truth, by virtue of the direct revelation of Jesus, which is guaranteed to her by His Presence. But this deposit of "All Truth" is applied by the Holy Spirit, opened out, adapted, made applicable by that Spirit, in accordance with the varying needs of varying ages. Of course it goes without saying that we cannot think pure Spirit—that the very purpose for which the organism of the Church was created was, that the Spirit of Christ might have a body, and hence the Church is visible as well as invisible, is neither alone, but both in one whole. It is like a coin, obverse and reverse, one side visible, the other invisible, but the value of the coin is nothing when it is mutilated. The life of the Church is the Spirit of God—the guiding, controlling, empowering force is the invisible Spirit of God. And the Church is the organ within which He works, and through which He works. God could act

S. John xvi. 13.

immediately, but He chooses to act mediately, as He has acted always in the history of the world. And the medium through which He acts and which He appointed for that purpose is His Church ; her title is her endowment with "power (*δύναμις*) from on high," *i.e.* the Holy Spirit ; and her commission is derived from the "authority" (*ἐξουσία*) of her Lord and Head, Jesus Christ, whose perpetual Presence within her is secured by the Holy Spirit.

So the Church is a divine-human body : human, because her work lies among men ; divine, because of the power by which alone she can accomplish that work, *i.e.* the personal Holy Spirit. She is a living Organism.

CHAPTER IV

THE SACRAMENTS

If the Church be a living organism she must possess the characteristics of all living organisms —the instinct of hunger, the necessity of growth, and the impulse to reproduction. But of course there comes a point at which all analogies between physical organisms and the spiritual Organism must part company. This point is arrived at by the universal issue of all physical life, death ; though death itself is only change. Every day closes in darkness, every living body ends in death ; but it is only the Church that holds that undying faith in the morning without an evening—the life everlasting.

Still there are these three resemblances between the Church and a physical organism : they must both eat, and they must both grow, and they must both reproduce themselves.

Before either can be done, there must be life. Life can only come from life, there is no such thing as spontaneous generation, and wherever there is life there is hunger, and whenever the hunger is satisfied there is growth, and wherever there is growth there is reproduction.

Whence then does the life of the member of the Church spring? From God. For the recognition of this, for its ratification, for the initial generative act, we are referred to the Sacrament of Baptism. The being He made, God claims in Baptism; the very vehicle of the Spirit, the body, He consecrates to His service. He enters into covenant relationship with the new individual, and the new individual enters into covenant relationship with Him. The being is recognised by God as His absolutely, and the individual recognises on his part the spiritual and moral obligations of that relationship. The child is signed with the sign of the self-sacrifice of his Lord. Henceforth he bears upon his flesh the mark and brand of God. He is henceforth Christ's soldier. His uniform is worn, and he is pledged to loyalty, as the Roman soldier was pledged by his military oath, the *sacramentum*.

S. John iii. 5.

But the new life thus given and received needs sustaining, and hence the Lord appointed

the great central Sacrament, the Communion of His Body and Blood. The new life must be fed, and this food has been provided. Our spiritual nature needs food as urgently as our bodily nature, and the Holy Communion is the divinely appointed way whereby our spiritual nature is fed ; and about the Sacrament itself there is something touchingly beautiful ; for outward and visible signs, the common elements of daily food, are consecrated as the *means* whereby we receive the inward and spiritual grace, or life, or food. Bread and wine for our bodies—the Flesh and Blood of the Son of Man for our spirits. Let us beware in our passion for dogmatic truth, in our craze after definitions, lest we materialize away the spirituality of this Sacrament on the one hand, or spiritualize away its reality on the other. We shall never in the present condition of limitations know the full, deep, inexhaustible riches of this Sacrament. It is a "Holy Mystery" in the good sense of a spiritual and real Sacrament. It is enough for us that our Lord has given unmistakable directions for us.

S. John vi. 53. "Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of man and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you." What are flesh and blood?—the *being* ; the Flesh and Blood of the Son of Man surely

signify His Presence. And at the institution of the Holy Communion, He used these words, which cannot be evaded or misunderstood, "Do this." It is a definite command, overwhelming the "right of private judgment." It is not a matter of choice, it is not optional, it is a positive command, that must be met with absolute obedience. Many of the reasons that keep full members of the Church of Christ away from the Holy Communion are really reasons that should drive them to it. Of course it is impossible to make too thorough a preparation. But where that is done, no denials of sense, no dulness of faith, no base unbelief should keep us away.

S. Luke xxii. 19. 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25.

The grace communicated is life; life implies personality, the Presence of Him "Who is our Life"; the very Life of Jesus is what we get as the result of our loving obedience; the spiritual Presence of Jesus, which is the "life of our life," and the Food that feeds us.

God forbid that we should think that God is "limited by His Sacraments," but when we obey Him we are absolutely sure that we meet Him, and that He comes into us. The Holy Communion is the "divinely appointed trysting-place" between the Person of Christ and us, in our spiritual hunger and weakness. It is a cer-

tain way whereby is answered that passionate longing of our spirits after the living God. There is no instinct that does not point to its fulfilment and satisfaction. All the overshadowing Presence of our Lord focuses about the Holy Communion. There are the external necessary acts and parts, appealing to our lower nature, and there is the interior Life, reviving our spiritual life. It is here that we best realize the awful and tender truth that "we may dwell in Him, and He in us." But outward and visible, and inward and spiritual, are only the obverse and reverse of one fact. You cannot separate them without destroying the whole Sacrament and defacing the Divine Image. It is not a question of metaphysics, but of life. Here am I, with the gnawing of spiritual appetite, hungering after God, and here is the feast of love wherein my Lord gives me Himself, the Food which alone can satisfy the appetite of the life He gave in the first instance. And why should I not avail myself of my right as a member of the body, to be fed with the Life of the body? Nay, if I am not fed with that Life, I cease to be more than a withered member and dangerous to the rest of the members.

Ephes. iv. 15, 16.

There are great dangers attendant upon this

wondrous privilege and duty, and one of the greatest of these may be called externalism, the failure to see below the surface of things, satisfaction with the mere ritual, blindness or indifference to the spiritual *acts* and processes, which alone give to the sensuous acts any validity or vitality.

One of the results of a right use of this Holy Sacrament, besides the power it gives us to endure as seeing Him Who is invisible, is, to teach us that there is in all life an element of sacramentalism. Here we feel at its quickest the impact and inflow of the Presence of Christ ; but there is a sacramental element in every religious act that is done religiously, and in every worldly experience that is borne religiously. How true it is that while we are in this limited condition of existence, we see "through a glass, darkly" ; the medium that reveals, conceals at the same time. This is the world of pictures, of shows, of externals, and we know that there is a deeper reality that lies behind things. Oh to get at that ! All phenomena have a value above their value in themselves : they represent some idea. Words themselves are but outlines of thoughts. And who is satisfied with the fleshly form of his friend ? Even under the sweet intelligence and expression that illuminate his face—there lies

1 Cor. xiii. 12.

something deeper. My friend is significant to me of a divine Idea that I cannot see, but that I am yet sure of, within him. He comes from the Profound of Being to me, he is an incarnation of some God-thought; but the thought, the being, is obscured by the very incarnation that assures me of it.

Yes, you and I lie overshadowed by the Presence of God, endued with the Holy Spirit. He is round us like the air we breathe. We are told that the normal life is that which is lived in correspondence with its environment. What is the environment of man? God!—Who is "never so far off as even to seem near." How am I to correspond with Him in Whom I live and move and have my being? The chief way which will lead me to a truer estimate of life has been appointed for me in the Holy Communion. Then God help me to "draw near with faith, and take this Holy Sacrament" to my strengthening. Thus only will the insatiable appetite of my spiritual nature be satisfied, with the only Food that *can* satisfy it, my Lord and my God!

CHAPTER V

THE MEANING OF LIFE

All temporal things and all temporal circumstances possess a value over and above that which belongs to them as things and circumstances. That which gives them real value is their capacity for conveying spiritual lessons. The visible is an object-lesson of the invisible, the temporal of the eternal. Just as the physical world is God's photographic album, representing underlying realities ; just as every form of life is the incarnation of a thought of God ; so the little world in which I move, trembles burdened with meaning to me. Nothing is insignificant to me, everything affects me, and is affected by me. I myself am a miniature of the Universe, a microcosm of the macrocosm.

Everyone has asked himself the question, "Why am I here?" What is the meaning of exist-

ence? I am conscious of splendid possibilities; I can aspire; I am essentially discontented with what I am. And yet the higher I can aspire, the deeper may be my fall. My heart seems rent in two by opposite gravitations, one downwards and one upwards. The world tends to subjugate the spirit, and the spirit feels that the world is too small for it. How to reconcile the conflicting elements that make up any ordinary life is the great question. Life's opportunities are so grand that it is sad to find so many missing them. The secret of life, the open secret of life, is that it is Sacramental. Yet the inward and spiritual grace is passed by, and only the outward and visible form desired. The external form that is really subject to constant change is eagerly grasped, and the internal truth which is alone eternal and permanent is missed. What we want is equilibrium, balance, the sense of the due proportion of life. This spiritual faculty of penetrative vision, this illumination of the Holy Spirit, belongs to the man who "thinks God's thoughts after Him." To him the world is full of that Divine Presence. The common wilderness bush is fired with the Shechinah. The immanence of the Creator-Spirit in the world turns it into a Holy of Holies. All things are seen as external modes of the Divine Mind,

incarnate thoughts of God. The God Who is omnipresent is known as Father, is known because He has revealed Himself as such in the Man Christ Jesus. Thus the world to the Christian is God's world—the Father's world—full of ignorance and stupidity and childish misconceptions ; yet it is the Father's world, made by Him, redeemed by Him, indwelt by Him. How many repeat the opening article of the Apostles' Creed without any adequate idea of all it involves, "I believe in God the Father Almighty?" If we *did* believe what we say we believe, what a jubilant, rejoicing life ours would be ! That is the faith that gives rest and peace, and extracts the meaning of life. There may be riddles that I cannot solve, questions I cannot answer, difficulties for which I can find no solution ; mutual mistrust and strife that nineteen centuries of Christianity have not killed ; war and hatred amongst the children of the Father who have not yielded to the sweet song of the Angels on the first Christmas morning, "Peace on earth, goodwill among men in whom He is well pleased." These seeming contradictions that confront me teach me that my powers of vision are limited. They impress upon me my littleness, conditioned by time and sense, so easily blinded by prejudice ; but if I

S. John viii. 42.

S. Luke ii. 41.

have made that faith my very own, I am prepared to believe that the Immanent Spirit is outworking His Divine Idea—evolving kosmos out of chaos, and in the meantime I am content to trust Him. He knows best how to do His own work. He can do without my suggestions, though He chooses not to do without my help.

And after all the Christian man is not without decided knowledge of God's intentions. He looks at the world, and to him it seems certain that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." He sees the unrest, the selfishness, the warped judgments, the apparent triumph of wrong; but in all these things, he hears an undertone of longing, of desire, on the part of men; of hope, vague it may be, unconscious it often is, but very real hope, that somewhere there is a solution, that somewhere there is rest. It is quite unthinkable, that the world is really the hideous mistake, the grim comedy, so tragic and awful, that it seems. The search after the meaning of life has been prosecuted in all ages. How can men rise above the heartbreak of life has ever been a burning question, but men have seldom thought of looking within the heartbreak itself for a meaning. Individualism has been oblivious of the rights of others, collectivism has ignored the

Rom. viii. 22.

Rom. viii. 19, 20.

rights of the individual. Men have sought to escape from temptations to sin by immuring themselves in caves, and setting stretches of solitary desert between themselves and the world. Men have looked on the world as the devil's world, on matter as evil in itself. Mystics in all ages have aimed at the annihilation of every form of desire. The world's sin and sorrow have been too much for them, the only escape seemed in flight. But how many of these hermitic souls have found that there is a world within man, that cannot be shut out, that penetrates into the vasty solitude? Man cannot get away from *himself*.

The spectacle of the world's sorrow is crushing, and when we people learn that we have to bear our part of it, the vague thought becomes concrete and personal, and we are overwhelmed by the weight of our own cross. The Incarnation is the key to the puzzle, the Incarnation, *as a present fact*, sheds a heavenly light over the darkness. We are persuaded that all things are in the Father's Hand; are under the direct control of the Spirit of God; that they are *all* working together for good; that God is everywhere; that "if we make our bed in Hades, He is there;" that, in short, it is impossible for us to get beyond His reach. The Eternal purpose

of love that directs the world is educative. The
Rom. viii. 19. world is in pain, but it is birth-pain, it waits for the Apocalypse of the sons of God.

Whittier wrote—

> "The world sits at the Feet of Christ,
> Unknowing, blind, and unconsoled ;
> It yet shall touch His garment's fold,
> And feel the heavenly Alchemist
> Transform its very dust to gold."

Rom. viii. 29. The Christian is the subject of predestination, he is predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's son.

In ordinary education there are many things for which the scholar can see no use. Much of the necessary rudimentary work seems a profitless grind. Punishment has its important place in real education, punishment that has as its effect prevention of error in the future, and amendment of error in the present. The work of God is never arbitrary. He works by well-known laws, and all men are in the grip of these iron laws : obedience brings immunity ; disobedience is followed by inevitable punishment. But the punishment is not the anger of an irresponsible tyrant who inflicts so much misery for so much sin ; it is the educative discipline of Eternal Love, who loves us too much to let us hurt ourselves by pleasing ourselves. There is

a true kindness in this apparent unkindness : the correction of Love is awful and severe ; and sin is only seen in its real character as exceeding sinful, when it is known to be an outrage on the Everlasting Love of the Father.

The illuminated soul knows that he is predestinated to conformity to the Divine Image, but there is nothing about that to foster pride. All the nearness of God to us, all the blessedness of the possession of the inward Christ, is ours, not that we may hug ourselves close with a feeling of superiority to the rest of the world. Jesus within does not make Pharisees, but missionaries. The Christian is a Christopher in two senses. He bears the Christ within, and he bears the inward Christ to the world. God has put us in the world "not to be ministered unto, but to minister." "By love, serve," is an essentially Christian legend. If our hearts are open to the woe and wretchedness of the world, if that sorrow have penetrated to the little circle in which we move, if it have invaded our own environment, it is our privilege and duty to show openly, that men may mark and know, that not only can we ourselves bear the image of the Saviour in our face, and the Presence of the Saviour in our hearts ; but that the same joy and peace belong to them, though they may

never have used their prerogatives as subjects of the Redemption. Thus, though we never open our lips, shall we preach Christ, the Saviour, the Abiding Master, the Brother born for adversities.

It is a great mistake that many make to think that to be a Christian necessitates the killing of all that makes me myself. They would have all men lop and spoil and curtail their nature, until they are unnaturally and artificially forced into a common type, with all distinctions of nature obliterated. What a weary monotony of commonplace natures this would involve! We have so often heard it said, "You must quite eliminate the personal element." This has an untrue meaning as well as a true one. It is true in the sense that "it is no longer I who live" but Christ Who liveth in me; but it is also true that Christ lives in *me;* it is not *destruction* but *consecration* of the personal element that is wanted. All the minute and delicate differentiations of my nature, that make my personality a distinct thing, that give me my individuality, and from which springs the wonderful power that is called *influence;* are emphasized and spring forth in accentuated beauty when they are indwelt by Christ, and used as His organs of manifestation.

We have sometimes wondered what is the secret of the charm and attractiveness about certain lives. We love to be near certain people. We rejoice in their influence, we feel magnetized by their personality. They need not be what men would call great or influential, they may be poor in worldly riches, but they are rich in spiritual force and winsomeness. They are full of sweetness and light. They leave a quickened ambition for what is pure behind them. They clear the atmosphere and leave it fragrant ; they find tears, but leave smiles ; they enter cloudy places and the sunshine of their presence dissipates the gloom ; you are happier because they have been near you ; their simple greeting falls upon you like a benediction. They are generally people who have suffered much, for God has no teacher like Sorrow ; sometimes they are invalids. The secret of their inspiration lies in the fact that they live consecrated lives ; they are indwelt by Love Incarnate ; they move at the impulse of that Indwelling Love. They, in their own personal experience, have found the meaning of life, that it means education to him who is willing to learn. A new meaning of life is given us by such people. All things are possible to the life lived by the power of the Son of God ; indwelt and impelled by the Spirit of God.

The supplies of life seem so inadequate to life's necessities. There are only "five loaves and two small fishes" among so many; but admit the Lord of Life, and at His Presence the selfish scramble ceases, and the supply becomes superabundant. Famine allowance in His Hands becomes more than enough to satisfy. Why do we worry over things if they do not go just as we want them to go? Why do we anxiously anticipate the future, and feel sure that it has nothing but sorrow for us? Why do we allow that nervous dread of danger, that is after all only *in nubibus*, to damp our ardour and prostrate our efforts? "Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you"—these are the words of Jesus. So much care is given to the body, so profoundly do we neglect the spirit.

S. John vi. 27.

To sum up all—This life is not the end, is not all, thank God! It points to another, "the world that sets this right." Therefore it is a preparation, a necessary accident in the being of an immortal spirit. It is God's nursery in which He is teaching us lessons (the use of which we often do not see) to be applied in some larger sphere of deepened powers. Here sorrow, pain, disappointment, death, have an inevitable value

in God's educative discipline. Here we lay the foundations of character, which tends to become permanent. All the experiences of this life only tend to wean our love from being centred on time-things, and to fix it upon things eternal. It is atheism not to trust God! The banner over us is Love. And when we are perplexed, and the mind sinks back exhausted from the endeavour to penetrate into the *Why* of life, and the heart is racked by trouble, it is best to lean back into the Arms of the Everlasting Love, which are the cradle of the human spirit.

But the recognition that the world is God's, though it is not aware of the dignity that belongs to it; and the faith that believes that the message of the Eternal Father to His stupid children, is, "I love you"; make *mere life* to a Christian a solemn thing. The needs of men are a great incentive to work; the Christian has heard the direct words of the Incarnate commissioning him to preach a Gospel to the world. He knows that he must "let his light (that is the inward Christ) so shine before men that they may see his good works and glorify his Father which is in Heaven." S. Matt. v. 16.

So life is no dream, but a stern reality full of solemn duty; so life is not a hideous mistake, but the unfolding of a divine purpose of love,

the evolution of a divine idea, the tremulous pencillings that usher in that awful rose of dawn, when the Golden Age shall come and all men shall know the Lord. Work for this ; there is nothing else worth working for. It is fame and wealth and worldly position that are the shadows, doing the Jesus-work, living the Jesus-life, is the reality.

> " I say to thee, do thou repeat,
> To the first man thou mayst meet,
> In lane, highway, or open street,
> That he and we and all men move
> Under a canopy of love,
> As broad as the blue sky above,
> That doubt and trouble, fear and pain
> And anguish, all are shadows vain,
> That death itself shall not remain."

And as to life's difficulties, they only prove the reality of our Christianity. A faith that will not stand the test of difficulty and opposition is not worth having.

The Parable of the Lily

Walking in my garden in the early Spring, I came to a corner where the heavy clay soil had been stamped down to a very hard, compressed condition ; and I saw two or three sheaths of Lily of the Valley, that had penetrated the un-

promising crust of clay, and I thought, what a mystery and what a power life has! The delicate lily spike that could be crushed to death between the finger and thumb had done wonders. The life in the bulb had awakened into activity, and nothing could stop it; and it made upwards through the darkness and the stiff clay to the light and air of heaven; and there it was, a beautiful living reproof of the *laissez faire* spirit, of the shiftless spirit, that in face of difficulties asks, "What is the use?" And the lily's life is only half below ground. It gets from the sunlight and air the gases that feed it. It sends into the atmosphere the gas that we want. It inhales and exhales. It absorbs colour, and the kisses of the sunlight are received on its upstretched flowers. It is full of beauty and perfume, and its work is reproductive. It leaves the world richer for its beautiful life in its obscure corner. It is a thought of God clothed in very lovely vesture. And how like the more complicated nature of you and me, rooted in earth, with the irresistible instinct of spiritual life, stretching upward above the world, conquering vast obstacles in its upward growth, catching its colour and beauty from the sunlight of God's smile and the dews and showers of God-sent affliction, breathing the perfumed breath of

consecrated influence, enriching the world by its presence there, and fulfilling the end of its being by reproducing itself in others, "bearing much fruit"; and all this simply by being true to its double nature, in the world and not of it, citizen of the earth, and at the same time citizen of heaven, and all because it is moved, stirred, impelled and guided by the Indwelling Life of God. God has many quiet lily lives glorifying Him in their own obscure shady corner, and each helps to sweeten and perfume the atmosphere of the world.

CHAPTER VI

THE CONSECRATION OF HOME LIFE

"CHRIST is the Master of this house" ought to be the motto written or unwritten of every home. It is here, in our homes, above everywhere else that we need the spirit of recollectedness. We ought always to remember the Divine Presence here, if we want home life to be what it ought to be and may be. The underlying consciousness that Jesus is here is the greatest help to us. It is a difficult place in which to live the Jesus-life, for the people know us so well. The saying that no man is a hero to his own valet ought never to be true. If in any case it is true it only proves that the man is not really a hero at all, for it is in the home that one's real character is shown.

We love to think of the homes that Christ knew—the carpenter's home in Nazareth, full

of sweet reasonableness; the home of Lazarus and his sisters at Bethany, the place that had an attraction and a welcome for the homeless Saviour during His last week here; the desolated home of Jairus, the life and light of which were quenched, as his little daughter lay dead. How the Lord respected the sorrow of the bereaved father, disputed the right of Death, and bending over the little body, spoke that word of authority, couched in the tender diminutive in which a loving man would speak to a dear child, "Little Pet, I say unto thee, arise!" And the warm flush of life chased away the pallid majesty of death, and she arose.

This Jesus is not dead, but alive for evermore and present in every home, eagerly desirous to work a greater miracle than that of resuscitating a corpse, waiting to touch the flinty heart and educe from it copious streams of love. Would that we ever remembered it!

Home ought to be to every member of the home circle a foretaste of God's Paradise; the one place in all the world where we are sure of not being misunderstood. Outside the threshold one leaves the trouble and care; and if trouble and care invade that sacred enclosure, it is marvellous how real sympathy can teach one to suffer and be strong. Troubles are halved

when they are shared, and joys more than doubled when they are communicated.

And yet what unhappy homes there are in this God's world ! What misery and wretchedness and continual bickering and open hatred do we find ! And when this is the case, we have not far to search for the reason. It is because the Divine Presence is not recognised. It is because the Source of all love and joy and true life, Christ, has been dethroned, and self has taken His place. A home where every member seeks his own advantage, where there is an absence of consideration, where each one tries to please himself, regardless of the supreme necessity of mutual forbearance, is no home at all. The members all nurse their own fads, each seeks to be first, each wants his own way, and the conflict between these opposing selves breeds continual unhappiness ; there is no yielding. "Bitterness, wrath, and evil speaking" cast a blight upon lives, and desecrate the court of that God's Temple, home. The censorious and critical spirit rules, or misrules. We have known people who expect help and sympathy from any one before their own relatives, and home is the last place on earth in which they expect to be understood ; the proverb has proved true in so many cases that "familiarity breeds

contempt," but it is only true where the persons are contemptible.

What perfect bliss there ought to be in the union of husband and wife, concord and accord of spirit as well as of body! Man is only half man without the complement of woman, his better half. And yet how frequently does this sweet relationship degenerate into mere tolerance, and even all too often change into intolerance! It is simply wicked the way marriages are hurried; how blindly two people will rush into the solemn Sacrament with no forethought, with barely the most superficial knowledge of each other; and then the years linger by in a vain regret, and marriage, that might be the loveliest thing imaginable, becomes a drag and weariness. There is no inspiration about it, only one long jar; and the two people, who ought to be one, drift further and further away from each other in aim and feeling and love, until the veiled hostility breaks out, and incompatibility of temper makes such married life an Inferno. How sad an end to the delicious dream of courtship! But the dream of courtship is found more blessed in the reality of marriage by those who are wedded spiritually. How many men have been made great simply by the inspiration of good wives! If people only took as great pains to preserve the

love they have gained as they took to awaken it, wedded love would be only a richer, fuller courtship. The love of a woman or the love of a man is so great a possession that it makes the possessor tremble with delight not unmixed with awe. It is too delicate for us to keep. Here then the realization and actualization of the Presence of Jesus is the great safeguard. We know one happy wedded couple who openly say that the secret of their growing love lies in the fact that it is consecrated, they feel it was God's gift. At the beginning of their engagement they recognised this, and they gave their love back again to the Lord to be guarded. Their first kiss was a Sacrament ; and they only gave up their love to receive it back again purified, exalted, and spiritualized.

We are speaking of marriages of love. The marriage of convenience is simply legalized prostitution. Marriage for position, for wealth, for family, may attain its outward end, but what a skeleton grins in the secret cupboard of the loveless marriage ! What wreck is made of the unique possibilities of the married life ! Love, loyalty, chivalry, self-sacrifice, noble effort, lofty aspiration, courage, a wide tenderness—these are the offspring of real marriage. It has frequently been noticed that in old age the very features of

the loving couple resemble each other. The natural outcome of love is imitation and assimilation. That is the ideal marriage which is made in heaven, and which equips both husband and wife for life's uphill climb or downhill experience.

Ruskin has written, "Home is the place of peace, and wherever a true Wife comes, this Home is always round her, Home is wherever she is." And George Eliot crowns the union of Dinah and Adam Bede, those two souls made one after sorrow and separation, with this beautiful bit of idealism that is the realism of many wedded hearts: "What greater thing is there for two human souls than to feel that they are joined for life, to strengthen each other in all labour, to restore each other in all sorrow, to minister to each other in all pain, to be one with each other in silent unspeakable memories at the moment of the last parting!" The *fons et origo* of all lovely love is Love Incarnate, Love enthroned, Whose Presence is ever with us.

It is true that home is a difficult place in which to live the consecrated life; but it ought not to be so difficult there as elsewhere, because we have the right to expect help and encouragement from our own flesh and blood. And home is the first place in which God expects us to

be faithful to Him and true to our redeemed nature. It is only when we have been faithful in that which is least that He rewards us with wider service. Home has the first claim upon us, and we often push to an unfair extremity our claim upon it, and ignore its claim on us. All life, especially home life, is a state of give and take. Why should we be less forbearing to our own family circle than we are to any stranger? Strangers have less demand upon us, our relatives have a supreme right to our best.

And yet how frequently is this forgotten, and a girl who is sweetness itself to others who do not know her well, reserves all her ill humours and morbid fancies for those who love her best. Let us be more courteous, more desirous to please, more willing to give up our own way, to sacrifice our own preferences at home. The charm and bloom of a really happy home life is a very delicate thing. It is ruined by the rude touch, it is wrecked by selfishness. The ideal home is that in which every member seeks to please his neighbour, in which the aim of each is the happiness of all, in which Jesus lives as Lord, and His Presence smoothes away the difficulties, and enables parents and children to love in spite of all differences.

It is a dreadful thing to have to believe that every little child is introduced at some time or other to the bitter facts of falsehood and wrong, and in most cases that introduction is made by those who ought to shield it. A false home-life is the source of all the social lies that make society so unreal. If the home is true, it would be impossible for one to leave its truth inside and carry pretence and subterfuge outside. The pretence and subterfuge come with us.

It only needs a little rift within the lute to make a hideous discordance of the music of home life. I know of nothing else but consecration day by day, by an act of will, to enable us to soften the frictions that do daily arise. Love is the secret of a happy home life, the Presence of Jesus, Who is Love, interpenetrating and elevating the entire nature of each one, and manifesting itself. And love knows when to shut its eyes, and love is a dread critic, and love knows how to make allowance; and love hopes all things, and love beareth all things, and love never faileth. Love will not dwell upon the differences of opinion and magnify them until they exasperate. We read our own motives and hidden thoughts into the actions of others. If we look for evil, if we expect meanness and untruth, we rarely fail to find them,

simply because we bring them. Some unhappy beings seem to be determined to discover what is unworthy, and when they do not find it they invent it. Any one can be a critic, the destructive spirit is rampant ; it needs a loving soul to believe all that is good and endure all that is ill. The carping self-satisfied nature views another's weaknesses through a telescope, and inverts it when he considers his virtues. We have seen home life degraded in these ways repeatedly.

It is the exaggeration of self that we have to fear. The home to one member of a family is like the Copernican system ; every one has to revolve around her, every one must give way to her, *she* is the centre. If she is a morbid *malade imaginaire*, she obtrudes her imaginary ailments upon notice from morning to night, she would be indignant if she were told she was selfish, and yet in a thousand little ways self asserts itself.

Now the service of love, the Jesus-life of self-abnegation, is the only way to secure that most perfect pattern of human happiness, the happiness of the home. Oh, how tender are its associations ! The very stones of the house that held so many simple household virtues are sacred to us. It was a grand character-forming school, that happy home ! From consecrated homes

have been produced and sent forth to bless the world, lives that are the salt of the earth. The mind is stored with its tenderest memories. There were we prepared for life's struggle. It was at a pure mother's knee that we first learned the story of Jesus. It was a father's example that made us ambitious of goodness. Father and mother taught us all we knew of God, and showed us God as Father and Mother to us, as the source of all fatherly and motherly love. Their memories have been not only the safeguard of many a young man on the slippery way of life, so beset with temptations, they have been the urgent inspiration to nobler effort. In S. Paul's Cathedral there is a monument to one of England's heroes, and at the foot of the soldierly figure is a little group, a mother and two boys ; round the younger of the two her arm is thrown lovingly, and she bends over him, pointing up to the hero—an allegory in stone of the sweet inspiration of Motherhood. And children too have their sacred ministry in the home. With what clinging delicate tendrils of love do they weave their being into our hearts ! The sight of their sunny faces breeds thought too deep for tears. How near they are to that Kingdom of Heaven from which our older feet seem to have wandered so far ! The patter of their

little feet, and the childish laugh and pretty baby talk make music with a witchery about it that smoothes out our wrinkles and makes us young again. We have felt that we bathe our hands in heaven when we lay them upon the fair hair of some little child. It is sad and significant that the sunlight so often dies out of a child's hair as it grows older. We see heaven breaking out of the human face divine when we look into the lucent blue of a little child's upturned eye. Longfellow has beautifully written of children :—

"O little feet ! that such long years
Must wander on through hopes and fears,
Must ache and bleed beneath your load.
I, nearer to the Wayside Inn,
Where toil shall cease and rest begin,
Am weary, thinking of your load.

"O little hearts ! that throb and beat
With such impatient, feverish heat,
Such limitless and strong desires ;
Mine that so long has glowed and burned,
With passions into ashes turned,
Now covers and conceals its fires.

"O little souls ! as pure and white
And crystalline as rays of light
Direct from Heaven their source divine ;
Reflected through the mist of years,
How red my setting sun appears,
How lurid looks this soul of mine !'

And the Great Father Who loves our children more than we do, sometimes wants them more than we do; and the hardest lesson in resignation a parent has to learn, is to give back the little spirit that has been lent to him. But there is nothing that enables us to realize the kingdom of heaven so blessedly as having the very roots of our affection, as having blood relations there.

'Tis God's way of making angels
Taking children from the earth,
Ere their fall succeeds temptation,
Ere is marred their virgin worth.

"A little child shall lead them"—Jesus in a little child is almighty to a parent's heart. Well for us if there lingers no regret about the memory of our own childhood. Well for us if there are no spoken words that we would give the world to recall. Well for us if we can remember no time when a careless or thoughtless or impatient speech filled the eyes of a mother with tears, dear eyes that we ought to have made shine with happiness. We have, some of us, wept at such sad memories over the open grave, and sent a cry of remorse and a cry for forgiveness across the grave into Eternity. Why do we wait until our beloved are robed in the regal majesty of

death before we discover how dear they are to us, and how we love them ?

"If you have gentle words and looks, my friends,
To spare for me,—if you have tears to shed
That I have suffered,—keep them not, I pray,
Until I hear not, see not—being dead.

"If you have flowers to give, fair lily buds,
White roses, daisies, meadow-stars that be
Mine own dear namesakes, let them smile and make
The air while yet I breathe it, sweet for me.

"For loving looks, though fraught with tenderness,
And kindly tears, though they fall thick and fast,
And words of praise, alas ! can naught avail
To lift the shadows from a life that's past.

"And rarest blossoms, what can they suffice,
Offered to one who can no longer gaze
Upon their beauty ? Flowers in coffins laid
Impart no sweetness to departed days."

Now in our home-life God gives us incalculable opportunities for treasuring up stores of blessed memories. Death must break into the most united circle, let him bring no unavailing regret for the irrevocable past.

We have all been children, in heart the noblest among us is still a little child ; to be greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven is to become a little child. Home relationships are the best symbols of our relationship to God. "Like as a father pitieth his own children, so is the Lord

merciful to them that fear Him." The two grand truths revealed by the Incarnation are the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. The simple picture of the brooding maternity of a common hen pictures the love of Jesus. Husband and wife are not more indissolubly one than our Maker Who is our Husband and we, than Christ Who is the Spouse and the Church which is His bride. With all humanity Christ claims real brotherhood, since He loved to call Himself Son of Man, our Elder Brother.

Of one thing we are sure, through the Presence of Christ within us. That secret Presence has taught us that there is no death, only change; that what we call death only increases and cannot break our love. Do we cease to love those whom we call our dead when we bury them? It is only the casket we bury, the perishable part is there, the real part still lives. It is an outrage to our deepest spiritual instincts to tell us that our love is at an end; if it be, what a waste of the greatest thing in the world!

The charm of home consists not in the grandeur of its surroundings, and the beauty and value of its furniture and decorations. It is the love that makes the home, and the Presence of Jesus

that secures the love. Some of the simplest and humblest homes have been the happiest.

One thought more as to the meaning of home life and its discipline, and this chapter will close. Home is a little world, and it is the preparation for the larger world into which we all must launch. It is the way God makes men of us. We begin by knowing what home love is, and that love deepens and broadens. At first it is exclusive; a stranger is not admitted to it, but what it teaches us is to look out for the source from which it springs. This we find in the love of God; and when once that is known as a personal possession, the home love is carried outside; the love of the indwelling Christ begets a feeling of kinship with those outside the home circle. No longer can that torrent be dammed within the narrow confines of the family circle. The widened powers of the vision of Love search out a larger outlook. We claim relationship with man, we grow to recognise and rejoice in the fact of the brotherhood of the whole human family, we love man as man, because he is man: this is the true evolution of the universal love of the home circle, and it makes men good citizens, good citizens of the world.

The Parable of the Gem Ring

I looked at the ring on the finger of my Beloved, and I fancied the gems and the gold spoke of the past, they compared experiences. "We," said the diamonds, "came from the bowels of the earth. We are very, very old. We are the light of a long vanished day, crystallized. But, oh, the process! All round us were intense heat, and a mighty chaos, vast movements, the upbuilding of mighty strata, the grind and attrition of nature, the pandemonium of cataclysm after cataclysm. Yet we had seen the sunlight, and taken it into our hearts; and there it lay, an imprisoned sunbeam in us each for ages and ages, until we were unburied and saw the sunlight again; but we did not look so beautiful then as now; we had suffered much externally; but in spite of our rough unpolished shape we knew the sunlight slept within us. Then we were taken to be cut, and this seemed to us the most painful experience of all. We were cut away, ground and polished, we lost in weight, but how we gained in beauty! We were too gross before for the imprisoned beauty and light to escape. Now our hearts flash out their most beautiful meaning, and we try to be true

to our purpose, and look into the eyes of our wearer like the love glances of him who put us on this fair hand." And the diamonds flashed as my Beloved's hand closed over mine.

Then spoke the sapphires. "We too, oh cousins, have been in prison, and have gone through our sorrows; but before we were made we saw the loving glance of the deepening blue night sky, and we loved it, it looked right through us and we were saturated with it, and have always carried Heaven with us, and now we have joined you,—we—like fragments of the deep blue night, lying round you as the night round the stars, and we too look into the eyes of our wearer who loves us, like the blue eyes of him who gave us." "Ah," said the gold, "we must have been made to come together, for I was once the congealed blood of the earth. Heat would melt me. I was beautiful, but I could not get free. I was held in the grip of quartz rocks, and the chaos and swelter and earthquakes of a world in building filled me with terror. Then after ages I was taken from the bed of a river, where nature had cooled my fever for years, and crushed and put into a smelting pot until I wept; but I wept myself free even in the furnace from the imprisoning rock, and a skilled artist thought, and made me

into my beautiful shape, with fingers delicate enough to hold you, children of the sky and the sunlight, and I clasp tightly so soft a finger and remind my wearer of her lover's handclasp. And we are mingling our natures and uniting to be a beautiful expression of the immortal love that gave us. We are round like Eternity, and the love that gave us is Eternal. We have sunny glances and blue eyes, set in the symbol of Eternity, like the love that makes Eternity magnificent. It was worth the pain and misery and imprisonment and melting and cutting to fulfil so fine an end. We have been kissed by sweet lips that responded to our message, and in kissing us they kissed the love of which we are the visible embodiment, and we have been bathed in tears, but of joy and not of sorrow, for love has its joy-tears. Surely the end crowns all."

CHAPTER VII

THE MYSTERY OF SUFFERING

Sometimes the sacred enclosure of home is invaded by suffering. Some great loss reduces the resources of the family, the members have to separate, and responsibility increases. An ideal home can bear this strain with ease. There is no disgrace in being poor. Poverty is not seldom the occasion of true heroism. The real love and unity are deepened. It is quite possible to be poor and yet very rich in all that is worth having, in all that ennobles the character ; for wealth of character (the only wealth that never dissipates) does not depend upon the possession of *things*, but upon being possessed by realities. Conventionally men look on poverty as an evil ; and indeed there is a grinding poverty, the result of the dishonesty and selfishness of others, that ought not to be. Poverty in itself

is no virtue. You may be poor in the world's sense, and selfish and proud and miserable. The only poverty that bears a benediction is poverty of Spirit—meekness, humility, the willingness to fill a little space; upon that poverty the Saviour has pronounced a Beatitude—"Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven." *Is*, not shall be. The Kingdom of Heaven, which Jesus tells us is within us, begins with the emptying of self.

A large outlook on life, and a wide experience, emphatically assert one thing, the universal presence of suffering and pain. Suffering seems inseparable from human life. In one form or other it holds all individuals and all
Job v. 7. classes under its empire. "Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward." And to a superficial observer much of the agony seems useless; and the innocent suffer for the guilty. Comparatively few of the children of men find that their pleasures more than counterbalance their pains. An expert has written—"Perhaps, indeed, he could scarcely be charged with exaggeration who should hold that the aggregate of man's unhappiness has increased with his increasing culture, and that the acuter sensibility and multiplied sources of distress more than outweigh the larger area from which his pleasures

are drawn, and the more numerous means of alleviation at his command. At least it appears certain that the heaping up of enjoyments, if ever it was designed as a means of producing happiness, has proved a signal failure." The presence of evil, the fact of suffering in the world, demands an explanation. In ourselves we hardly find the answer; certainly this is true if we make the senses the criterion of life, and yet we refuse to think there is no meaning below the surface. If this world is all, it is quite unbearable. We never asked to come here, and being here we find our condition one of the strictest limitations, one of inevitable suffering. We seem to be the victims of circumstance; we are the sufferers by heredity, Nature red in tooth and claw reeks with human hearts' blood. Some one must be responsible for us, and it must be He Who made us. The only philosophy that has attempted any explanation of the mystery of suffering is the philosophy of revelation. Judged by the standard of the world the only perfect Life that the world has seen was the most abject prey of suffering. Jesus was the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. The bitterest experience a great Teacher can have was His, that of being misunderstood. He was betrayed to death by the kiss of an intimate, forsaken in the hour

of His need by His disciples, hated of all men, He Who was Love Incarnate. He died the death of a malefactor ; to have known Him, to be His follower, was to bear the stigma of madness and infamy, was to court martyrdom. The Life of Jesus was an object lesson in suffering. His Life cries, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow." What is the meaning of this?

And it is this Ideal Sufferer Who professes to have comfort and blessedness and rest to give to all the weary and heavy laden His cry is, "Come unto Me!" The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says that He was made perfect through sufferings. We are told that He had an object in freely offering Himself, that the joy that was set before Him, for which He endured the Cross and despised the shame, was the joy of making us happy. The Cross seems the saddest failure, and yet we regard it as the explanation, to him who can understand, of all suffering. For the Cross of Jesus is the climax of His Love, His Eternal attitude fixed before us once in time, the emergence of the Spirit in and under and through the flesh. And it is the result of His Presence within the heart that turns the rebellion of the flesh into the loving

Heb. ii. 10.

acceptance of the Spirit, it is not *we* who can bear suffering, it is *He in us*. He has absolutely identified Himself with us, so that we do not live apart from Him. "The sorrow of the world worketh death." "Except ye eat the Flesh and drink the Blood of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you." "He is our peace."

Sorrow can be evaded by none, it must be endured. But it cannot be endured alone, "Without Me ye can do nothing." It is only by retiring to the Secret of His Presence that we can get the least hope of a solution; and even then the full satisfaction, the perfect answer must be left by faith to be given in some other wider world. Here we are so rigidly conditioned, so strictly limited. We are but caged birds, and faith is an absolute necessity, to enable us to endure. We can endure only as far as we can see Him Who is invisible. All life points to fulfilment somewhere else. There could be no question were there not an answer: only human impatience will not wait. The sufferings of Jesus mean *something*.

"He met His human doom
Of suffering, and took it for a crown;
The loneliness, the weariness, the strife,
The base return, the Passion and the Cross,
And the withdrawal of His Father's face.

"So that for ever since, in minds of men
By some true instinct this life has survived
In a religious immemorial light,
Pre-eminent in one thing most of all;
The Man of Sorrows;—and the Cross of Christ
Is more to us than all His miracles.
"And that most closely we may follow Him
By suffering, have all hearts of men allowed.
"Is suffering then more near and dear to God
For its own sake than joy is? God forbid!
We know not its beginning nor its end;
Is it a sacrifice? A test? A school?
The fruit of Evil;—yet what Evil means
None knoweth, though he spent his life to know.
We suffer. Why we suffer,—that is hid
With God's foreknowledge in the clouds of Heaven.
The first book written sends that human cry
Out of the clear Chaldean pasture-lands
Down forty centuries; and no answer yet
Is found, nor will be found, while yet we live
In limitations of humanity."

What if we can trust God that He has something to teach us in the suffering itself? That underlying it, wrapped up in it, is some everlasting purpose of love. What if we need such educative discipline to enable us to reach the God-idea of true manhood and womanhood? What if sorrow is not an end but a means, and that when we will along the plane of God's Will, we are led at last to see that

"Ill that He blesses turns to good,
And unblest good is ill,
And all is right that seems most wrong
If it be His sweet will."

Spiritual character is the reality, not *things*. Our troubles are building our characters, and it is the character that lives for ever. What we are spiritually is the most important thing, and if we are spiritually evolved best in the school of discipline and suffering, we shall learn to say with S. Augustine, "Via crucis, via lucis," and "What a cross to have no cross." "Our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." Distinguish between the thing-al experience and the *real* evolution. The one is the channel through which the other flows.

It is daily, hourly communion with the indwelling Christ which will alone help us. He will make us more than conquerors. Sorrow and trouble and pain are so different when we know that He is with us in all, that nothing touches our very bodies even (which are consecrated by His Presence) that does not touch Him. It is the sober recollectedness of His Presence that sweetens the hardest lot and softens the stoniest pillow. Simple souls have rejoiced in this. Thousands to-day, who have

been stunned by bereavement or shattered in fortune, or who now lie through the long-drawn hours in pain and weariness, *know* the blessedness of being able to lean back on Him. What a soothing there is in the love words a mother croons out over her sickly babe! The cries cease, the pain is drowned in the motherhood. But what a peace fills the most troubled soul when the Divine Presence breathes His comfort in the silence of the spirit!

"I cannot think why God allows me to live so long! Why does He not take me? I am of no use, only a burden to you all; I am in fearful pain. Oh, that He would let me die!"

These were the words of a girl sufferer who lingered on for weeks in dreadful agony. They were not fretful words, but just the sigh of a tired child who wanted rest. One of the watchers said, "Perhaps He has a great work for you to do, and that is why He does not take you. He has taught us all how real His Presence is, we have learned lessons of faith and trust at your sick bed that we could have learned nowhere else." And the sufferer smiled in her pain.

The discontent of the world has a subtle meaning. The unsatisfied yearnings of men and women are true spiritual instincts, and they point to their fulfilment. They are the movements

of a spiritual appetite which no *things* can satisfy, which only an immortal food can appease. The unrest of the world points to possible rest. The unrest is part of the divine education, leading up to the fulfilment of the Eternal purpose of love which the Father-Spirit has for His children. As George Herbert puts it, God says of man—

> "Let him be rich and weary, that at least
> If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
> May toss him to My Breast."

Yet the one object of the fussy excited sensationalism of the age is to prevent that silence in which God's voice is heard. The world is ransacked for ministrants to the sensuous desires. The race is for happiness; but with the possession of any coveted joy its loses its value. Satiety sets in, *ennui* invades the busiest pleasure-hunter's life. To kill time is the great desire. To fly from sorrow, to put off the evil day, to drown trouble in excitement and feverish movement is what men want. To the man who does not trust the guidance of God, to him who sees no divine purpose, there remains no attitude of mind but pessimism, that devil's creed. The Christian has a cue given him that will at all events enable him to face and endure pain, to accept it, even while it remains a mystery to

him, to trust and believe that there is a meaning in sorrow; he cannot *see* in the night of distress, but he has faith.

> "Oh, yet we trust that somehow good
> Will be the final goal of ill,
> To pangs of nature, sins of will,
> Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;
>
> That nothing walks with aimless feet;
> That not one life shall be destroyed
> Or cast as rubbish to the void,
> When God hath made the pile complete."

Faith in this Eternal purpose of salvation, to the actualization of which sorrow and pain are divinely appointed ministers, is what will help us, together with the very definite promise of the Lord within, "Lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the world."

"Let us learn a lesson from the flight of birds. When with outspread wings they face the opposing air they rise by the resistance. There is something suggestive even about the sight of a soaring bird. Said an old Saint, 'When it soars it makes with outspread wings the sign of the Cross. When the holy sign is marred it sinks to earth.'"

"We cry in our agony, in weakness, failure, perplexity of heart, that there is no hope nor help. No hand seems to direct the storm, no pity listens God has forsaken us, we say.

But as we say so, do we not recall the words which fell in that great outcry on Calvary from the Conqueror's lips, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' Blackness of darkness and despair, and sorrow blotting out God's face, and feebleness sinking without a stay, these are not failure. In these characters was written first the charter of our deliverance; these are the characters in which it is renewed."

The Secret Presence of Jesus is peace, deep, unruffled by the bitterest storms of earth's sorrow and pain. To know Him is to have rest, to lean on Him is to find that underneath us are "the Everlasting Arms." And in the strength of that perfect faith we can dare to face sin and suffering, and use them as God's stepping stones, best suited to our little pace, that lead to the quiet resting places of communion. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Abiding in the Presence and the Presence abiding in us, is the secret cure for all pain, the only attitude in which we can suffer and be strong. All the misery and heartbreak of the world, all the sorrow, all the evil, all the pain, all the mystery, all the insatiable longing, all the natural search after rest and desire for happiness, these are only the growing pains of a world in process of redemption.

It is often the touch of personal sorrow that is needed in many a life to make it really full of consolation and help. "To have suffered much is like knowing many languages. You have learnt to understand all, and to make yourself intelligible to all." There is a blessed free-masonry between those who have felt the touch of the wing of God's great Angel Suffering. Suffering is God's accolade, dubbing us knights of His. I will accept the inevitable mystery of sorrow, I must know it that I may be full of sympathy for others. To die is so easy, to live is so much more noble.

And my own sufferings are fruitful for others too. Mrs. Browning wrote :—

> "God did anoint thee with His odorous oil
> To wrestle, not to reign! And He assigns
> All thy tears over, like pure crystallines,
> For younger fellow-workers of the soil
> To wear for amulets. So others shall
> Take patience, labour, to their heart and hand,
> From thy hand and thy heart and thy brave cheer,
> And God's grace fructify through thee to all.
> The least flower with a brimming cup may stand
> And share its dew-drop with another near."

There is no joy so pure, so awful, so humbling as the joy of having comforted and helped another soul in its agony. We may be God's ministrant angels in another's Gethsemane.

The Parable of the Butterfly

Out of my study window I looked upon a distant mist of orchard blossom that rested like a scarf of soft white drapery upon the hills towards the sea, and as I looked a fleck of blossom seemed endowed with life and floated on the light air upwards to my window seat. It was only a Puris Brassica, the large garden white butterfly, and it settled for a moment on the window sill, flirting its wings, and then took flight. But it had stayed long enough to set me thinking. I thought of its history, and the life history of many of its brothers, from the time when it performed the herculean feat of emerging from its exquisite shell, a little black, thread-like worm, with no instinct but that of hunger, eating as hard as it could, to the full development of the living gem, with Nature's mystic hieroglyphics upon its wings. As Philip Bailey writes in that much too little known and estimated epic of his, "Festus," "all animals are living hieroglyphs." I supposed the caterpillar endowed with reason and able to put together the meaning of its experience, while ignorant of the beautiful apocalypse with which it should crown its life. To begin with, the

living thread within the egg would grow until it was too large, it would outgrow its prison walls, and become too large for its narrow environment. Discomfort and restraint would be its first experience. Then to fracture the shell and escape into some larger place! And at length it would do this. Now it could be happy; the world was before it; guided by every instinct, it sought the pleasant places and eat and eat, as though it lived to eat. But soon again it felt discomfort, its appetite had outgrown its capacity, its clothes were growing too small, feeding had lost its charm; again it found its environment too small, and with pain and struggle it emerged from its old suit of clothes and changed its skin, and went on eating with new zest. This happened several times, until it was large and well developed, with exquisite faculties, with a silk loom inside it, with the future wings deep within, as an unconscious prophecy of its glorification. But after all it was only a creeping worm, glued to a leaf. Again it felt worse than ever, sick and ill; so ill that the life of appetite lost all pleasure. It would leave a world where pleasure was succeeded by pain, each pain worse than the last. So it crawled up the oak palings into a cranny in some dark quiet corner and grew worse. Its

skin shortened and swelled in the middle, and a sort of trance of death ensued, and it remained in the pupa state perhaps for a winter, to outward appearance dead. Eating had seemed its chief *raison d'être*, but now movement and all external action were suspended. If it could reason on the past, what a series of pains life would seem to it! One after another its skins were too small for it, and had to be somehow struggled out of; and though after each struggle a brief period of ease succeeded, yet now it could not move; even to be a creeping worm were better than to be bound to one blade of grass or hanging from a wall. And then how long this imprisonment lasted! But, lo, the sun's warmth made the life stir below its swathings, a new creature was being formed in the darkness. It was not death, but change that was going on, and the pupa case split, and the new creature with wings sunned itself in a new world. The Greeks called the butterfly *psyche*, the soul. We might call it a picture of the spirit of man, bound to earth, driven by the vehement necessity of hunger, undergoing constant struggle, breaking its way time after time from a too narrow environment into a larger life, entering the pupa state that seemed to put a period to its life, but emerging with the new

nature that it had carried even as a worm deep within it, below the power of vision; with wings—emancipated at last, the meaning of struggle and pain and mystery and appetite revealed in its glorious beauty and enlarged powers. Spirit of mine, thou art somewhere! Hidden; yet a prophecy of what I am to be at the last! Tied, bound, confined, with mysteries about thee, thou shalt emerge, and from the discarded pupa case of the body thou shalt sun thyself, and thy wings shall grow in the larger life of the presence of God.

CHAPTER VIII

WORK

God is the great worker. As a rule, men have a very inadequate idea of work. They work in order, as soon as possible, to stop working. There is a true dignity that belongs to work, it is a divine appointment. It fills our time, it employs all our faculties, the only way to succeed in it is to love it. When work ceases, trouble begins. There is a very great truth in the nursery rhyme—

> "Satan finds some mischief still
> For idle hands to do."

It is a splendid thing to have to earn the bread you eat. No man who does that is a pauper, and the man who does not has no place in life.

But let us get to the deep meaning of work,

that it is necessary for something more important than the mere provision of the meat that perisheth, that it produces character, and leaves us in our inmost being better or worse as it is truly or indifferently done.

This fact, that all life's work is the mode of actualizing the God-idea within, will show us how grand and dignified a thing work is. The Presence of Jesus is with us in our work, consecrating it whatever it is, making it a Sacramental thing to us. The real worker is no mere man-pleaser. His work is not done for *kudos*, nor for admiration, nor for outward success, but for duty's sake ; and because the work lies before him.

There is no menial or degrading work, all work is sacred. It may be very simple, but it is full of value.

> "Who sweeps a room as for God's sake
> Makes that and the action fine."

Since the days when the Saviour of the world used the carpenter's tools and kept together the little home at Nazareth by His manual labour ; since the days when St. Paul half-blind used the trade of tent-making to support himself, though he had "power" to do otherwise, all work has been placed upon its right footing.

Again the thought that this is God's world will help us. It is God's vineyard, and His message to each soul is, "Son, go work to-day in My vineyard." Your duty is a divine appointment—do not look at the work itself and despise it because it seems trivial, look behind the action, and see the divine necessity. We should be happier and truer would we accept emancipation from the shallow standards of the world's measurements. All work is sacred. As Robert Browning writes—

> "All service ranks the same with God:
> If now, as formerly He trod
> Paradise, His Presence fills
> Our earth, each only as God wills
> Can work—God's puppets, best and worst,
> Are we;—there is no last nor first.
> Say not a 'small event'! Why 'small'?
> Costs it more pain that this ye call
> A 'great event' should come to pass
> Than that?"

God has given me the work to do for which I am best fitted. My ever-surrounding duty is not a thing of chance—but of Providence. I do injustice to the Eternal prevision when I rebel against my work. When I do the meanest duty from my heart I am preparing myself for some higher service, and faithfulness in that which is least means promotion. When down in some

lowly place, unnoticed, unapplauded, passed over, I do the work that lies at hand—my quiet humility is sure to be broken by the voice that says, "Friend, come up higher." Service is the highest blessing, not to be served. Jesus came to serve, not to be served; and the world, and His disciples even, at first failed to penetrate to the blessed meaning.

Why do men look upon work as a curse? Is it because of the old episode of the fall and the work that was subsequently laid upon man's shoulders? But what a beatitude lies in the curse of the Father!

> "Get leave to work
> In this world! 'tis the best you get at all!
> For God in cursing, gives us better gifts
> Than men in benediction. God says sweat
> For foreheads,—men say crowns—and so we are crowned,
> Aye, gashed—by some tormenting circle of steel
> Which snaps with a secret spring—Get Work! Get Work!
> Be sure 'tis better than what work you get."

What comfort here for those of us who are simple Gibeonites in the world, hewers of wood and drawers of water! The humblest work is necessary to the whole. The world cannot get on without us. It is not effect, it is not glory, it is *work* that tells. It is the filling of the life with action that defends us from ourselves, and preserves us from temptation.

And to the faithful worker who knows that in his loyalty to common duty he is obeying his Lord's command, work grows beautiful. It is full of revelations, full of inspiration, full of promise. "If any man will do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine." There is no nature so vacuous as that of the mere theorist ; a theory is revealed in its truth or falsity when it is applied. A life of empty dreaming is not life at all. Nature's insignia of nobility are hands that are hard with manual labour, or agile and facile with exercise, brows that are contracted by determination, foreheads that are wrinkled with thought furrows. Oh, to be men and women who are doing something, who have a place and a responsibility in life, who do not care to choose their work but are contented to do the work given them, however humble it may be.

S. John vii. 17.

The truest work is not labour for physical necessity, not something done with a view to something to be got, but work for work's sake. And it is very wonderful what work will do to clear the air of clouds, the mind of doubts, and the heart of fear. And many a man has been saved from heartbreak by work. How many a man perplexed by the mocking questions of life has been saved from blank despair by plunging body and soul into active work, even of the

simplest kind, and unconsciously to himself in his honest work he has been helping out the answer.

To some people work is uncongenial, they would rather vegetate than live. They work harder in the endeavour to shirk and evade duty than they would have had to do in accomplishing it, the end is dissatisfaction and a sense of unworthiness. Emerson has truly said that, "Every man's task is his life happiness. The conviction that his work is dear to God, and cannot be spared, defends him."

No man is really religious who dislikes work, for work is the truest prayer, it is the translation of prayer into life. To pray alone is not enough, often my prayer is answered in my work.

There to help me in every duty, in every detail of my work, there to sweeten its acerbities, to round off its difficult angles, is the Divine Presence. It is the Inward Christ Who gives me the motive as well as the power of true work. He propels and impels me. He makes me feel the necessity within me to make my life be the God-idea that underlies it. He says within me, from the midst of my rigid surroundings, "I must be about my Father's business. I must work the works of Him that sent me."

S Luke ii. 49.

The true way in which to work is not for any

selfish motive, for God first, for others because for God. That must be my definite aim. Work's reward is larger capacity for work. The God Who has put me here knows best what I am fit for. He has His purpose in my life—a purpose I so seldom see. He never makes a mistake. His purpose is evolved and secured by faithful work just where I am, and my work grows sacred under this splendid thought.

The greatest worker is the noblest man. The man who is always idle is a thing, not a man. Idleness shuts the door of possibility in a man's face. For the longest life is only a little span. The fragment of eternity that you and I shall spend in this preparatory school of the world is only about three score years and ten. Time is not the measure of a man's earth life. Deeds, not hours; heartbeats, not years; faithfulness and service, not decades; mark actual progress in life. Faculties, possibilities, potentialities, lie wrapped up in every spirit.

Work is the opportunity God gives us of making these realities. My faculties increase with use, atrophy with neglect, die with abuse. An embryonic angel is within us each—to grow, by faithful work. The spirit is nourished by loving definite work,—and the spirit knows no infirmities of age. It grows younger, more

2 Cor iv. 19. capable, more vigorous. The inner man may be renewed day by day.

The crown of life is only promised to those who *endure*; the chaplet of victory belongs only to him to whom life has been an unceasing fight; the rest of Paradise can only be really appreciated by those who have made of life a long patient work and service. And rest is not inactivity, Paradise is not repose, Heaven is not a state of *dolce far niente*. It is change of work, work unhindered by weariness, untiring service, but still work; the more perfect exercise of faculties that have been trained here by struggle and determined effort. The man who succeeds is the man whose heart is in his work.

To get money, to be able to live in pleasure, to secure a condition in which there shall be no necessity for work, this is not the end of life. There is no condition in which work is not a necessity. Will it not add the feeling of dignity to the work you have to do in this world if you recognise that it is by means of your work that God is training you to be conformed to the image of His Son?

He who works has Jesus with him. There is a real urgency about work. "Whoso will not work, neither shall he eat;" and that duty that subserves the lower end ministers

to the highest end, Godlikeness in the human spirit.

Idleness is certainly a degradation of our humanity, a mean evasion of the solemn responsibility of life. One has well written, "Work is life, and idleness is death, to body, mind, and soul. Work is like the river, broad and deep and brimming over, which keeps the meadows green; idleness is like the stagnant marsh, which exhales the pestilence. Work makes the flowers and fruits, idleness the weeds and barren trees of the garden. Work brightens the metal with friction, idleness corrodes it with rust. The man at work on duty welcomes the approach of his master, the idle man would hide if he could."

The idle man is a thief, the man who wastes his master's time is as bad as the man who robs his master's till. Behind the earthly master stands the One who is our Master, even Christ. Within the worker is a Presence more work-compelling and urgent than that of the foreman. Promotion comes to the rank and file of faithful workers. To put your best into the tiniest detail of your work is to be a loyal and faithful worker. So many scamp the work that is not on the surface and finish the visible work to attract the eye. Such work is dishonest, and

would only be tolerated in an age ruled by outward appearance.

Work if it is to be true must be religious. Whosoever among men may pass over the minutiæ of our work, whether it be domestic work, sweeping the corners, dusting under ornaments, or guiding a state, *God sees all.* And work that is loyal and honest is work that lasts, for it is done as perfectly as we know how, to the tiniest detail.

Religious work blesses and enriches the world. All the masterpieces of Art are religious works. The old artists worked for God. Up far away out of sight on some Cathedrals are hundreds of figures perfect in the tiniest part, lovingly chiselled, with no human eye to mark their beauty. But God sees them. When the presence of the Great Worker is recognised the most trivial work grows consecrated. It becomes a sacrament of the invisible, a representation of what of beauty lies struggling for expression within our spirits. It is but a sorry age that produces the jerrybuilder, an age of externalism that paints great names upon tiny gateposts, that craves after decorations without the solid earnest work that can earn them, that can buy a superficial distinction with gold not always cleanly or kindly come by. We are in

the world to work, let us put all we know into it, and do the duty that lies next to us with all our might. There is no royal road to real distinction, but work. And the benediction of God rests upon the honest worker ; even natural blessings reward true work. The sleep of the labouring man is sweet,—how sweet !

You and I are needed in the world. Our work is needed for the perfecting of the whole. We are members of a body, and members in particular, for us to fret and fume because we have not more outwardly exalted work but shows that we have missed the true idea of work. That work is exalted that is well done, to the best of our ability, whether it be polishing a pair of boots, or writing an epic. There are good and bad bootblacks as well as good and indifferent poets. It is not the sort of work that makes the essential difference ; it is the honesty and the truth of the work itself.

Yes, your work, whatever it is, is needed in the world and by God. Do not try to scamp it —do it honestly, and as well as you can. You had not the choice of your work. All you have to do is to put your best into it. Is it not true that "Genius is the infinite capacity for taking pains"? as Carlyle says. Genius is not something that works by leaps and bounds, and is

forced to wait for the inspiration and afflatus of the moments that so rarely come. Genius is capacity for being true to detail—it is work from love and loyalty. In George Eliot's poem "Stradivarius," she makes Naldo the painter try to borrow money of Stradivarius. Naldo is erratic, and excuses his idleness by his mistaken idea of genius. He is full of great ideas for pictures—but they are barren and never come to anything. He has the wish for fame, but will not buckle to at the work that would ensure success. He has a lordly disdain of humble truthfulness in work, and argues with Stradivarius that less faithful work would bring him in more money. He is no true artist, but he is full of an idea for a picture. He wants to borrow two louis d'or,"

> "to buy the canvas and the costly blues—
> Trust me a fortnight."
> "Where are the last two
> I lent thee for thy Judith?—her thou saw'st
> In saffron gown, with Holofernes' head
> And beauty all complete?"
> "She is but sketched:
> I lack the proper model—and the mood.
> A great idea is an eagle's egg,
> Craves time for hatching; while the eagle sits
> Feed her."
> "If thou wilt call thy pictures eggs
> I call the hatching WORK. 'Tis God gives skill,
> But not without men's hands: He could not make
> Antonio Stradivarius' violins
> Without Antonio. Get thee to thy easel."

The message of the great worker God to us each is this, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

There are very many people who make a rigid separation between what they call religious life and secular life. In reality there is no distinction. One cannot be religious in Church and irreligious in the workshop or home. The relationship between the two lives has been aptly illustrated by some one who says the religious and the secular lives are not tangent circles but concentric circles—and the circumference of the religious embraces the smaller circle of the secular. All life is religious, all life is religious work. Whatever is not religious work is not work in the highest sense.

An amateur and dilettante disposition prompts us to dabble in a hundred pursuits, doing work in none; and thus we fritter away the powers that used faithfully in pursuit of a definite object would have made us true workers with ability to work and love of it.

We have spoken about work in general terms. There is much that might be added as to distinctly religious work, but we maintain that the principle behind all work is the same. It is that God's voice is heard in the call of our diurnal toil. Life is not given us to spend in dreaming,

but in doing. It is easy to dream of high endeavour, it is hard to put the sublimest principle into the detail of daily life-work. Underlying the commonest action is the loftiest principle, "Whether ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Ever clear and distinct is the voice of God that sounds in the consecrated life, "This is the way, walk ye in it." To obey, which means sometimes to be "content to fill a little space so He be glorified," is the difficulty; but it can be done. Here we are in the world with the clear call to work, the necessity for action, with a thousand demands upon our endeavour, calls of love, calls of need, claims of suffering, yearnings of loneliness. To radiate Christ in common life is our prerogative. To let our light—the Light of His Presence—"so shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in Heaven."

The time of trial is coming, we know it in our secret consciousness, the time that is to try every man's work. Only can we perceive the sacredness of toil when the Lord within shows us that no good work ever fails, that faithfulness in a few things means rulership over many things and entry into the Everlasting joy. The simplest deed that is a work of love has a reflex

action, it returns in benediction on the doer, and it may make some one else happy, if it be only one of Christ's little ones. The truest work may be done in a hand-clasp, a look, the outbreathing of sympathy even though it be not expressed by a single word. To be Christ-bearers is our sublime prerogative, and we may be such in the most ordinary work. The way to find real happiness is not to search after it, is not to try and shirk work ; but to consecrate the smallest duty and do it as unto Him.

CHAPTER IX

COMMONPLACE SURROUNDINGS

A MODERN novelist makes one of his characters, a young girl, with the world before her, write home thus :—"Oh, how I long to go out into the world! I want to shine in it. I want to become great and glorious. I could do it too, I know I could. I have got it in me, I am sure I have. Yet here I am in a little dark corner, crying for the sunshine." And the sentiment is a common one. If only our surroundings were different from what they are, we think our lives would be so much happier. We lay the blame for our own littleness on our environment. We rebel against our limitations. We have the desire to succeed, but we do not care for the daily grind without which success is impossible. How magnificent, we think, to be able to draw tears from a vast audience and

make them bow beneath the witchery of our music, forgetting that there is nothing so necessary, and nothing so monotonous, and nothing so exacting, as the hours that have to be spent every day for years over exercises and scales. Genius may be born, but it is frustrated without the severest culture. It is made as well as born, and the process of the making is not romantic. But there are comparatively few who have genius. The ordinary life is made up of little things, and the ordinary person despises the little things. Simple duties, plain obligations, tiny sorrows, ordinary happinesses, these are the sum of most lives. It is chiefly discontent with their commonplace surroundings that turns men and women into cynics and critics and pessimists. To such, this is the worst of all possible worlds ; life is a mistake ; if they had had the ordering of things they would have done so much better, they would have given a lesson to the Creator, and they never see that this is impious blasphemy. For the world is not a machine set agoing by the Maker, Who finished with it when He set it to work, but He is immanent in it as Providence. The Presence of Jesus is in the ordinary life as well as in the extraordinary.

There is much in the lives of great numbers that is mechanical. Whole classes of workers

are called by a suggestive nomenclature "*hands*," an odious term, paring down the work of life to the merest function of the machine. "Cabined, cribbed, confined," is the sad cry of many a person who is groping for some high meaning in humdrum surroundings. But there are compensations too. The larger life that is longed for only means deeper responsibilities. Simple duties are plain and straightforward, and may be done with as much heart in them as those deeds we fancy loftier. If the simplicity of some lives is wearying, the complexity of other lives is maddening. There is not much to choose between overwhelming responsibility and homely monotony. The littleness and commonplace character of our duties need not belittle us. The purpose of the Eternal may shine through. The consecrated life sees below the tiny relationships and minute circumstances, deep underlying truths and possibilities. We read into our surroundings what is in us. The surroundings do not make the character great or small, the character makes the surroundings what they are. Man is not the tool of fate or a creature moulded by his environment. Man is the master who forces circumstances to his own dominant will.

It is of no use for you to inveigh against

the monotony of your life ; you cannot change places with the brickfield horse, who goes round and round for ever in the same circle, stirring up the same mud, tied to the same pole. If your life is like that, it is more than probable that that is all you are fit for. To fret and fume against the commonplace is not the mark of a great mind, but the exhibition of a childish pettishness. Learn the dignity of the common things of common life, of common duty, and you will begin to think differently.

"O restless spirit ! wherefore strain
Beyond thy sphere ?
Heaven and Hell, with their joy and pain
Are now and here.
Back to thyself is measured well
All thou hast given ;
Thy neighbour's wrong is thy present hell.
His bliss, thy heaven.
And in life, in death, in dark and light,
All are God's care ;
Sound the black abyss, pierce the deep of night,
And He is there.
Leaning on Him, make with reverent meekness
His own thy will,
And with strength from Him shall thy utter weakness
Life's task fulfil."

I wonder why men try to bear this monotony when there is One with them Who knows all the weariness of life, Whose blessed Life (ever lived in the rare atmosphere of communion with

the Father, an air too rare for ordinary mortals to breathe,) was always judged by the false standards of externalism and formalism. He knows all the weariness, all the monotony of your life. Nothing is trivial, everything is burdened with spiritual truth and beauty. The man who sees no beauty in the commonplace, who has no poetry or music or imagination in his composition, could certainly see nothing worthy of wonder or awe in the startling and uncommon. How many people pass by a wayside flower blooming in some hedgerow with disdain, "Oh, it's only a wild-flower!" It is commonplace to the commonplace man. To the uncommon man, the thinker, the philosopher, the poet, it is an epitome of creation, and holds within its delicate form the sublime mystery of life. It is a great teacher. Tennyson writes :—

> "Flower in the crannied wall,
> I pluck you out of the crannies,
> I hold you here, root and all in my hand,
> Little flower,—but if I could understand
> What you are, root and all, and all in all,
> I should know what God and man is."

And Wordsworth could write :—

> "To me the meanest flower that blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

How delightful to know from the lips of Jesus that our most insignificant needs are not indifferent to the Father, that He Who marks the fall of a sparrow, counts the very hairs of our heads!

It is a morbid craze for sensationalism that makes us discontented and fills us with murmurings against common life. The old Jewish craving for signs and wonders and portents is found in the common man of the twentieth century and in the common woman too. To one without the poetic faculty there is no poetry in common life. But, when we pierce below all the conventional and artificial externalism of the common man, we find he is at heart a poet, but that modern life has done its best to obscure and kill the poetic vision.

To the man or woman who is captivated by society veneer and varnish, and the meretricious glitter of conventionality, the lives of the poor seem unutterably sordid and impossible. To the man whose nature is as God made it, whose judgments are not warped, and who has no over-refined faddishness, there is a poetry in common life, in the lives of the poor especially, that is seen very distinctly. Daily there are unrecorded heroisms taking place in the squalid courts and alleys, as any one who has worked among them

knows. The beauty of self-sacrifice, unconscious of its own splendour, is a constant marvel, and gilds some very dirty corners of our great cities with a gleam of Heaven's light. The way the poor will help each other, the generosity with which they will assist each other, the tender human sympathy, very ungrammatical, sublimely ignorant of aspirates, with which they will show their true manhood and womanhood, is a thing to thank God for. If ever regeneration comes to society, we think it will come from what the superficial call the lower strata.

We have known a poor man at his wits' end, heartbroken at the loss of a loving wife, with a large family of children crying around his knees, and without the wherewithal to give the dear dead a decent funeral; and when the circumstances leaked out, (for the poor are proud with a true pride that would shame and surprise some of the wealthy,) in less time than it takes to tell it, every dweller in the court has contributed his mite, oh so willingly, though some could ill afford it. And mothers who themselves hardly knew how to make ends meet, and feed the hungry appetites of their own little ones, took charge of his children. And the poor are punctilious in their decencies too, and, from one knew not what secret place, black clothes were

found that the children might wear the signs of mourning when they followed mother to her grave.

Yes, to the man who is not swayed by the standards of the world, which are nearly all external, to the man who looks at life as it is, there is a vast pathos, a terrible reality, and a divine beauty and poetry in commonplace life. God's Angels go about in disguise of threadbare clothes sometimes. There is no leveller like the Gospel. It exalts the humble and meek and brings down the high looks of the proud. It is no externals of wealth, material or intellectual, that give us our dignity in the sight of God. We are all equal before Him. The fatherhood of God has its correlative truth to reveal to man, viz., the brotherhood of man, "All ye are brethren."

The poor are so much more easily reached than those who belong to what we are pleased to call the upper classes. There is an inveterate shyness about the well-to-do Englishman, especially on religious matters,—but the humanity lies much nearer the surface among the poor.

Let us settle it for ourselves that there is a divine purpose in our present surroundings. That because God has placed us here, here is the best possible place for us; and here, around us,

lies the work we are best fitted for. The work may seem uncongenial, we may fret and chafe against the narrow environment; but it is the best, and it is necessary for us. It has perhaps an education for us that we could compass nowhere else, and amidst no other circumstances.

Life and life's circumstances are not meant to rule us, we are meant to rule them. And to the man who acquiesces in the will of God, to a certain extent, circumstances will be indifferent to him. He has the freedom of this earth given him. He is God's freeman. He is at true liberty, the liberty of living an absolute slave to the divine Will. By such a man the language of S. Paul will be understood and appreciated:

Phil. iv. 11, 12. "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; everywhere and in all things I am instructed both how to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Not in rebellion, but in submission, is found the secret. Not to kick against the monotony of life, but to accept it with perfect faith in the love and knowledge of the Father Who has put me where I am, is the privilege of the Christian,

the Christ's man. Let us ever go back, again and again, to the fact that God has a work for us to do amidst our surroundings, and a lesson to teach us by our surroundings. The presence and power of Christ, ever within the spirit of man, to aid, to comfort, to strengthen ; the sense, the abiding sub-consciousness of the Inward Christ,—these are the splendid truths through which to look at our lives.

We err so often and our rebellion breaks out so frequently, diffusing a sense of ill and unhappiness throughout our circle, marring the suavity of our influence, spoiling the beautiful possibilities of our life, because we make the supreme end and aim of life, happiness. It is *not* happiness, it is goodness, Godlikeness. And a man can be good in the tiniest place in the world, the world's obscure corners may be filled with goodness, for real Godlikeness finds its most appropriate sphere of manifestation amid surroundings that are not good. And its prerogative is to mould circumstances, to make a fresher atmosphere, with clearer, larger views of life, to inspire more cleanly and wholesome thoughts, to purify the sordidness of life's dingy places.

The home in Nazareth was poor and commonplace, an artizan's ménage, yet from it came

the Light of the World. The life of a fisherman was full of the simplest labour, hard, austere, exposed to danger, full of disappointment, yet it formed God's university in which He trained Apostolic minds and simple lives that have changed the current of the world's thought. The occupation of the tax-collector was full of temptation to dishonesty, was a despised position, only occupied by renegade Jews who had lost the grand idea of the Theocracy, and yet S. Matthew was called from it by the prevision of Jesus.

The infinitely little is as much part of God's possession as the infinitely great: great and little do not exist with Him; they are all in all to a generation that is ruled by externalism. It is from not only commonplace but evil surroundings that God is ever evolving His idea, and He actualizes it spite of and in the midst of these. It is from the shameful Cross of a malefactor that Jesus rules the world. The world sees the Cross and it is a stumbling-block and foolishness. The spirit that looks below the surface to the God-meaning underlying the shame and scorn of Calvary, knows that the Cross means salvation. The average man sees only a Victim and a Cross, the illuminated spirit sees a Universal King and an everlasting Throne. Well might S. Paul say

1 Cor. i. 23.

that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world and things which are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in His Presence." 1 Cor. i. 27.

After all it is a matter of *point d'appui*. It all depends upon how you look at life, what you see in it, what you bring to it. The burden of life's monotony is utterly intolerable without the Christ-view of life. The religion of Jesus does not, as so many who do not understand it, think, add to the weight of life by superimposing upon life's many burdens, the almost impossible weight of spirituality. The religion of Jesus, the Presence of Jesus, makes life tolerable, lightens its burdens, it is that alone which makes life endurable. There is so much pure caricature about the religiosity of men. It is a mockery and travesty of real religion. Real religion is the divine Presence of Jesus outworking itself within the limitations and in the surroundings of an individual. And only in His Presence is there fulness of joy. But when men mistakenly

make the service of Jesus consist in slavery to detail and externalism, when they so misread the true meaning of religion as to think that its object is to make us unnatural, to fill us with gloom, to impose heavier burdens upon us, to quench all the light and joy of life in the gloom of a settled melancholy which views the world as essentially evil, and every form of joy as evil, we cannot but think that they have misread the object of the Incarnation. The claim of Jesus is not that He may rob us of peace, and give us the intolerable weight of impossible obligations and responsibilities which we can neither bear nor evade ; but that He may give us rest and peace.

S. John x. 10. "I am come that they might have *life*, and that they might have it more abundantly." The more abundant life ! Ah, is it not that we have longed for, is it not that desire that has made us rebel against the monotonousness of our commonplace surroundings ? We have thought that a fuller larger life could come as the result of change of environment. But circumstances do not make life, life makes circumstances. In a larger sphere we should find only a larger disappointment. It is not in *things* at all that life is found. If you have the Presence of Jesus you have the more abundant life for which you yearn. It is only His Presence that gives you

that fulness of life, and the fulness of the divine life will change the character of your surroundings to you, though the surroundings themselves may remain just the same.

But, though the burden and mystery of life curtailed and maimed is vast, no life is destitute of joys. Even the commonest lot in life is replete with them. And if it be true that the Presence of Christ alone makes life's burdens endurable, it is also true that the joys and pleasures of life are intensified and purified by that same Presence. And God's lovely picture gallery of the world is full of beauty; joy and satisfaction abound for the senses and spirits of men. None can shut out God's sky. And even though I may live and toil in the midst of vast populations, or a country wrecked of verdure by the chemical pollution of great factories, light and shadow beautify my world, and greater beauty than ever glowed on natural objects, lies, albeit well-nigh hidden, in the faces that hurry by me; strange gleams flash out of eyes that glance into mine. Mystery and fascination and a God-revelation wait for me in the personality of my fellow-toilers, and if I have the Divine Presence, I have the faculty that discerns a beauty in common humanity greater and sweeter than of any light that ever

played on land or sea. Great and loving deeds do not depend on the *éclat* which they gain, their greatness and beauty can neither be diminished nor increased by the applause or disdain with which they are received by the onlookers. Their beauty lies in their motive; the spirit which seeks manifestation through them; the great throbbing love that finds outlet and satisfaction in spending itself through them. A great deed does not necessarily demand a great theatre in which to enact itself. The more sordid and sad surroundings are, the greater is the demand for beauty of life. High thinking is quite compatible with simple living. The unprotected state of women and children, their weakness, their dignity, their need, should call forth all the chivalry of the knights and gentlemen of Jesus, even though they are arrayed in no damascened mail, but in common fustian. Sometimes the greatest heart beats in an emaciated body and under threadbare garments. What fools we are to look at the garments and never see the heart!

It is not things in themselves that are good or bad, it is their purpose, their *raison d'être* that gives them value. It is not our surroundings that give us dignity or rob us of position, in the penetrating judgment of God, and God-

seeing men and women. It is the divine within that struggles for expression, that is rewarded of God.

You spend your time in vain, when you regret and chafe under the limitations of your environment. Find in your environment the place and the inspiration for a higher life. The simplest lives are often the greatest.

Our real value lies not in our surroundings, but in our power of faithful reflection. Retire into the Divine Presence and your life will be transformed, and men will see that you have been with Jesus. You will radiate the beauty of His Presence, you will "mind and bear the Image of your Saviour in your face." Let us pray, not, "Deliver me from the littleness and meanness of my surroundings, O Lord," but, "Make me true to my common duties, and an express Image of Thy Person, a reflection of the fulness of Thy Glory, O Lord."

Not unfrequently appearances are misleading, and if we judge exteriorly we are apt to be mistaken. Who would have imagined that romance, sentiment and pathos were to be found in a rotund, red-faced, West country peasant woman? Meeting Mary—in the road, she looked a type of the simple country woman, rather heavy and stolid, the last thing you would have

said about her was that she was imaginative, and even a trifle poetic. Certainly you would not have thought that her environment lent itself to sentiment. She lived in a tiny white thatched cottage, one of three built on the road, and about two foot of road was stolen to make flower-beds along the front of each little home. Mary had the loveliest show of white lilies to be seen in the countryside. Eight feet in length was her little lily-bed, and certainly the whole village took a pride in the flowers. They admired them, Mary loved them. About sixty years old herself, you could see her sticking them, and caring for them, and she would raise herself with flushed face and heavy breathing, and smile if you praised them. "You see, sir, they'm mother's lilies. Poor mother loved 'em. and they seem a sort of living link between us, though she has been dead nigh upon twenty years." If you happened to pass the cottage late on a spring evening, you would have heard the strains of a violin. You could enter, and there you would see an old, grey-haired man in his antique oaken armchair on one side of the chimney corner; a wood fire on the open hearthstone, and Mary on the opposite side, playing to her husband simple Scotch airs that he liked and popular hymn tunes, because he

loved them. Not classical, not Wagnerian; but the quavering voices and the stringy notes made beautiful harmony no doubt in angelic ears. West country peasants in a thatched cottage, a little bed of lilies outside, and a tremulous fiddle-string pulsing away in the glow of a few sticks on the hearth; and a love stronger than death, and the Eternal beauty and harmony, go not so badly together.

The Parable of the Stagnant Pool

Common things are sometimes very beautiful in themselves, sometimes are beautiful in their surroundings. There is nothing in itself very attractive about a rush-fringed stagnant pool, but I once saw one glorified. In the summer famous for its sunsets, which were supposed to have been made more beautiful by floating volcanic dust, I walked along a Hertfordshire lane, and coming to a gate I leaned over to let the quiet and beauty sink restfully into my heart. The prospect was not a wide one. A flower-starred field bounded by blue hills in the distance, and enclosed by pine woods on either side. The sun's disc had descended below the horizon, and the crescent moon attended by a single star rode in the zenith. The sky was

magnificent ; shafts of rose-tinted cloud strata widened out from the west. Amethystine and opaline hues and the most delicate blue dissolved into each other. The moon and star lay like diamonds on a delicate cushion of deepening blue, and the little pool lay still and quiet under the glory ; not a ripple disturbed its surface, but it reflected colour and moon and star and the mystery of deep shadow and red pine trunks. Heaven and earth were reflected from its quiet bosom. It lay open to the play of that pageant of light. So, thought I, many a poor common life, with muddy and fouled rim, yet with the deep peace of God within it, reflects the glories by which it is surrounded. It is still because of God's peace, no ripple of passion disturbs it, it just lies open to the glory above it, and from its deep inmost being reflects the loveliness by which it is saturated. In itself unbeautiful and commonplace, but radiant with the light and beauty of the heaven above it, it makes a little faithful picture of heaven on earth. Glory above it, beauty around it, peace within it, and yet only a poor little simple pool of a life. So the simplest life, being interpenetrated by the ideal beauty of the Presence of God, may be a type and manifestation of that Shechinah.

CHAPTER X

AMBITION

THERE is nothing in the preceding chapter that makes justifiable ambition impossible. Indeed, without a right and proper ambition life would stagnate, and stagnation is opposed to the underlying Divine principle of all true life, which is Progress. But no man can realize his laudable ambition by worrying about it. Worry only unfits one for the common duties of life. All the anxious worry in the world will not help us. And indeed over careful anxiety was reproved by our Lord. No man by "taking thought" can add one cubit to his stature. To get on, to progress, to rise, is a natural instinctive desire in the normal man. To *grow* is the nature of the spiritual man, and until the end is attained, (if ever it be,) ambition has a proper place and work in a man's life. But the great

S. Matt. vi. 27.

Phil. iii. 13, 14.

necessity is that our first ambition should be for goodness ; the rest will follow. It is not always necessary that a man should have over abundance of material goods, it is always an absolute necessity that he be good ; and of goodness he can never have too much, he can never have enough. We are told that it is our duty to covet earnestly the best gifts, chiefest of which is love. It is ingrained in the constitution of our nature that we must have an ideal. Ambition is that spirit which strains forward after the ideal, and it finds its expression in earnest endeavour. And ambition will never be without its helpful function and use to us, for this reason, that the ideal recedes from us. We reach some peak upon which the ideal seemed to repose, but when we arrive there, the ideal is not there, but throned upon some loftier summit. Thus we are ever being led onward and upward; and ambition is never daunted by discouragement. There is a discontent that is an essentially noble thing, and the source of all progress.

1 Cor. xiv. 1.

Phil. iii. 12.

It is well for the world that the servant should wish to become a master, but his ambition will only be realized by his loyalty to his service. It is well for the world that men and women feel surging within them great capacities which struggle after effectual, appropriate and perfect

expression. It is this justifiable ambition that carries us triumphantly over the difficulties of life. We know we have a message for the world : our speech may be faltering, and only hide the throbbing meaning within us ; but there is the meaning, and we will *make* it clear at whatever cost. Who has not felt a deep sympathy with Disraeli in the ignominious failure of his maiden speech in the House of Commons? The grandeur of his determination showed his undaunted ambition, "The time will come when you *shall* hear me." *Excelsior* is the instinctive cry of the noble nature, and the world needs our noblest, and God wants it too. The men and women who can best do His work are not the idle and narrow and enervated. They must be broad and generous and tolerant in disposition and full of inspiration. God wants and expects us to make the best of our powers. A larger life, a fuller life, a higher life, that is the secret of true ambition.

Do you ever see a hill-crest without wanting to surmount it? Why? I suppose partly for the satisfaction of overcoming the difficulties of the ascent, partly for the sake of knowing what lies beyond. We want the larger view, the higher standpoint, to get up out of the narrow valleys into rarer air, where there is nothing above us

but God's heaven, and the world lies below us. An illustration this of the instinctive spirit of man's ambition.

Alas, that this great and glorious instinct, as with all our noble qualities, may be degraded and misdirected. If the world-spirit has us in thrall, our ambition will be for appearance instead of for reality, we shall long to *seem* instead of to *be*. If we *are*, we are sure to seem, but if we only seem to be one thing and are really another, what a mockery is the world's acclamation! When misled by lower ambitions, men will sacrifice the rights of others. The desire to scramble up the social ladder leads to a condition of things that would be very humorous if it were not so sad. Pretence, shams, selfishness, indecent self-advertisement, place-hunting, influence often of the back-stairs, we stoop to it all that men may think us somebody in the social world; and oh, the heartburning that is the consequent! We know what shams we are, however great social successes we may seem. There can be no triumph in such success; and yet not to be, but to seem to appear to be, is the desire of so many of us.

Ambition is only justifiable when the object for which it seeks is good and noble. But how rarely is this right ambition felt, how commonly

does ambition only point to an unworthy ignoble object! "When I awake up after Thy Likeness I shall be satisfied with it." It was only a spiritual nature that found voice in that holy ambition. Not realities but things are the goal of the short-sighted, time-limited ambitions of the multitudes. Money, lands, fame, admiration, power, these are sought with the avidity of insatiable lust. If we would only remember that nothing this world can give of empire or power is sufficient to satisfy our spiritual ambitions! All things lie before you; choose your ideal from those unseen and eternal things which are not subject to mutation and loss and decay, which never can deceive you, which have some lasting value in the after world to which you are going, and for which this is a preparation. But these things can only be spiritually discerned, and many men are as dull and blind as owls to spiritual things, and the night-pleasures of time and sense whose praises they sing, and for which they live and labour, are very hollow to one whose spiritual ambition has been whetted. When judged by the standard of truth and spirituality and real value, how poor do the decorations and possessions of the man of the world appear! It is only spiritual ambition that is justifiable, and it is just this ambition that

Ps. xvii. 16.

seems lacking, not only in the average man, but even in some men head and shoulders above their fellows.

Carlyle writes of Sir Walter Scott, "Alas, Scott, with all his health, was *infected;* sick of the fearfullest malady, that of ambition.

"It is one of the strangest, most tragical histories under this sun that so poor a passion can lead so strong a man into such mad extremes. Surely, were not a man a fool always, one might say there was something eminently distracted, in this, *end* as it would, of a Walter Scott writing daily with the ardour of a steam-engine, that he might make £15,000 a year, and buy upholstery with it. To cover the walls of a stone house in Selkirkshire with nicknacks, ancient armour and genealogical shields, what can we name it but a being bit with delirium of a kind? That tract after tract of moorland in the shire of Selkirk should be joined together on parchment and by a ring fence, and named after one's own name, —why, it is a shabby, small-type edition of your vulgar Napoleons, Alexanders, and conquering heroes, not counted venerable by any teacher of men."

It was the end that showed the ambition, the end, not bad in itself, but not the highest, to restore an external grandeur, to labour and

struggle for *things* that literally perished. How poor and unsatisfactory!

One of the favourite pictures of life is that of a race—of a race in which competition is an incentive; the way we are to run is so that we may obtain the prize. In other words we are to put all we know into our life, not for the prize of admiration or wealth or a wide repute, but to realize that duty demands ambition as an inspiration. We are not our own. We are responsible for our brothers as well as for ourselves. The noble Christian ambition is to shine for God, and for God in the persons of God's children who are around us. To be holy, to be useful, to be a blessing, is a sanctified ambition. To be a visible embodiment of the Father's will is the only true ideal, and it embraces our conduct to and influence upon others.

1 Cor. ix. 24.

And then, what little child is there who in his best and truest moods does not feel filled with ambition to please his father? Surely to us who are only "children of a larger growth," the great ambition is to please our Heavenly Father. The ideal ambition of the Christian has been uttered by the Christ, "Lo, I come to do Thy Will, O My God."

1 Thess. iv. 1.

Heb. x. 7.

And this ambition is independent of surroundings, nay, it finds in the surroundings,

whatever they are, its field for exercise. All around us are vast opportunities. The meanest life teems with them. This consecrated ambition appeals hourly to the Source of all strength for help. Blessed is the man or woman who realizes the solemnity, the dignity, the meaning of life. We are put here to help and bless others. And the life that is fired with this holy ambition prays at the opening of each new day, "Lord, help me to make some one else a little happier this day;" and the aspiration does not dissipate with its out-breathing in prayer, either; it is ever on the alert, it grows *wise* in the power of winning souls.

Ambition that begins and ends in the shadowy region of dream is of no use in a very substantial world like this, full of sorrow and heartbreak. Ambition that becomes dominant and rules the remotest action is what is needed. What a splendid invocation from the very Presence of God comes to us in the Holy Communion Office, "Lift up your hearts." But such noble ambition, if it be real, if the heart-response, directed by a definite act of will, rises, "We lift them up unto the Lord," will be no rapt ecstasy of a visionary, of a mystic whose wraith-like idealism leaves him spent as to force, and unfitted by the inevitable reaction for

dealing with a sorrowful and sordid world, with its mean woes and trivial sorrows of men, women and children. It will be the practical ambition that sends us forth from the Presence, with the Presence yet within us, on our ambitious and Christly work of blessing and comfort.

I want to be good, I will be good, this is the greatest desire of the children of the Highest. The man who is merely theorist has no place in the battle of life. We are not placed here to wander at our erratic will hither and thither, purposeless; we are under the spell of God, God's spell is upon us, therefore must our life be a Gospel, a good news from the everlasting Father to His ignorant and stupid children, children who know not their Father. Let but the eternal purpose of love be recognised, and our hearts' ambition will be fired to do our part, albeit an infinitesimal one, towards the realization of that purpose. We are captivated by the magnificent purpose and predestination of the good God for man. So vast, so tender, so transcendent, so minute a love, all-embracing, forgetting none, holding in it the certainty of a golden age yet to dawn for the world of sinful and suffering men and women, evokes all our enthusiasm. "We needs must love the highest when we see it."

And to be used by God as a necessary instrument in the outworking of so magnificent a decree, is the loftiest ambition that can inspire us. When once the eye has seen the supernal beauty, and knows that that beauty of love and peace are an open vision for the sad world, it is impossible for any one to rest contented with anything less than that; there is no room for the lower ideals in the soul, along with that. It fills and permeates the whole man, body, soul and spirit; and life takes on a new dignity; and work grows more full of benediction; and the temporary ills, pains, sorrows, and sins of life are searched for the splendid meaning that we know underlies them.

There is a force of gravitation about the love of God; and you might as well try to keep the needle from pointing to the magnetic pole, as deflect a spirit that has once known the nature and power and purpose of the love of Him Who filleth all in all, from supreme worship and effort to do His Will in His world.

And things, the commonest things, may be illuminated by this consecrated ambition. It is not what you do, so much as *how* you do it, that matters greatly. Into the words we speak, into our very manner, the silent but forceful atmosphere that surrounds us, we may bring this

high ambition. All lower ambitions are doomed to disappointment, because by strenuous efforts we may reach them. Possession means discontent, when we have a thing it ceases to be of value to us, it is only the ambition of goodness, that can never be absolutely realized but may be relatively realized, which leads on and on, and enables us to transcend our selfishness. The source from which this justifiable ambition is fed is the Lord within. The world with its lower ideals and meaner ambitions ever struggles to quench the divine fire, but it leaps up again. That inward impulse which speaks to us, "I must be about My Father's business," can never be ultimately resisted. The *ἀνάγκη*, the mastering necessity to preach the Gospel of Hope, pours its compulsion throughout the consecrated nature. But it is a spiritual illumination when a man grows to see that the end of God's work in the world is its everlasting bliss, that God is slowly evolving His Divine Will, and His Spirit is breathing over the troubled chaos of life, and reducing it to order ; that the end of this world is not annihilation, that the flickering sparks of goodness have no doom to be quenched in the illimitable void of nothingness ; that God is the end, the "One far-off Divine event, to which the whole creation moves."

Ideally already have the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ. Actually they are in process of becoming so, now, day by day, in spite of the negations of sense, the apparent denials of life's failure, the unexplained misery of the world and the presence of sin. And in the slow process of actualizing God's idea, the Great Worker needs us with our tiny powers consecrated afresh with holy ambition, to do His Will. We love the far horizons of the Eternal purpose, they belong to us. After our eyes have been filled with that sunlight, the world's brightest ambitions look very dark, and yet transfigured are life's tiniest duties. Our daily trivial tasks become sacramental when we know that they are necessary to the completion of God's purpose. Nothing is common or unclean. All is transfigured. How eloquent a picture is that of the Transfiguration! The Eternal Glory of Godhead palpitated through the fleshly tabernacle of the Son of Man. The impetuous disciple wanted that to last for ever; but his equilibrium was upset by the vision. The vision faded, and the Son of Man was seen as before with the three friends, and they descended the Mount of Transfiguration only to find human disease and

madness foaming at the bottom, and the other disciples powerless to aid the sufferer or appease the sorrowing parent-love. Down from the Mount into the thick of sin, bearing the splendour of overcoming power. That is our duty. Oh, that we might be filled with ambition to do it by the power of the Life of God outworking through us! The commonest, the most distasteful duty may be done from a deep Eternal motive. It will only thus be done truly, and the commonness and disagreeableness will be taken from it. In the "Legend Beautiful" Longfellow represents a monk prostrate in devotion in his cell. In the midst of his adoration the vision of Christ floods his cell with its radiance. While he bows spell-bound in silent worship before the Lord, his rapt devotion is broken in upon by the sound of the Convent bell, which reminds him that it is his duty to feed the clamorous crowd of beggars who are now besieging the gate for food. Thereupon arose a struggle between duty and inclination: should he leave the supernal Vision, never before vouchsafed, and do it this indignity? Or should he stay in adoration? Slowly and sorrowfully he listened to duty, and obeyed its call. He went and fed the unsavoury multitude, and

returned to his cell, wondering whether the Vision would be there still. As he neared his cell door, the glory streamed from it, and the Vision thus addressed him :—

> "'Had'st thou stayed, I must have fled,'
> This is what the Vision said.
> 'Do thy duty, that is best,
> Leave unto thy God the rest.'"

CHAPTER XI

PATIENCE

PATIENCE is one of those quiet graces that are not over popular. But few sound its praises, and yet all need it. If the wheels of life are to run smoothly there must be great patience. An age of hurry begets a spirit of impatience, and a life may be spoiled by the latter. Is not the undue exaltation of self at the root of our lack of this gentle grace? It is a homely grace, and the truth it conveys is the opposite to petulant self-assertion. There are many homes where patience becomes difficult, over-individualism has fostered our lack of forbearance with each other. There is sure to be unpleasantness and friction even when these are not galled into open conflict, where the members of a family are not mutually forbearing. Is it not in little things that the character is most clearly seen? Tiny indications fix

its whereabouts—indications that are so minute that they might easily escape detection by the unobservant. They are dropped unconsciously, and yet their meaning is quite unmistakable. Even when impatience does not find expression in words, a gesture speaks quite as emphatically. A toss of the head, a shrug of the shoulders, a movement of the body,—any or all of these reveal the attitude of mind of the *poseur*. They convey a very poor opinion of the one against whom they are directed, and a very good opinion of the one who makes them. There is something very pitiful in the impatience of the young for the old, the child for the parent. And impatience often makes a wounded heart. Because everything does not take the turn we want, is no reason nor excuse for impatience. Because another is slow and I am quick is no reason why I should be impatient with him. It is generally the young who have need of patience : and yet we have known a miserable and selfish old age very petulant, exacting and impatient, too. Is not impatience, instead of being a proof of strength of character, the invariable accompaniment of weakness, and a sign of immaturity ? The old, with wide experience, can afford to wait patiently. The young man who starts in life with an over confident spirit, feels it hard that the world does not change at

his word of command, and he has to undergo many an unpleasant experience, and to learn that the world can get on admirably without him, before he discovers that it is patience alone that wins in the long run. Impatient hurry is like the hare, patience like the tortoise in Æsop's fable. The youthful reformer expects to work his miracles of healing by a *coup de main* ; he would make the world listen to him perforce. But the world as a rule is not so eager to be reformed. Habit has a long hold upon the race, and life has not seldom witnessed the myth repeated, and Pegasus yoked with an ox. Poor Pegasus ! but poor ox too, so slow, with so fiery and impetuous and impossible a yoke-fellow ! Evil has been with us for centuries, to expect it to be remedied in a few years is to expect too much. Truth can afford to wait, and truth's waiting does not mean idleness any more than it means despair. Impatience is the fault of a man who is not quite sure of his cause, and is not quite sure of himself. We grant that it is difficult to be patient, but not nearly so difficult when you can feel the stamp of God's authority on your cause, the authority of the Eternal Right ; but if you make the rejection of your message a personal affront to yourself you have not yet discovered the relative value of the

individual and Truth—with a capital T. Error is never venerable, though it be hoary. And there is something very sublime in the spectacle of a Galileo, with Inquisition tortures before him, and Mother Church fulminating her thunders against him and a whole demon chorus of ignorance shouting him down with cries of blasphemy! heresy! quietly taking his stand on Eternal Truth, and replying to the hurtling execration with the patience of one who knew and could afford to wait. "And yet it moves." It is often so, the world martyrs him to-day whom it canonizes to-morrow. It was so with Jesus, it is so with every one who is indwelt by Jesus. "If they have persecuted Me, they will persecute you also; if they have kept My sayings they will keep yours also; and these things will they do unto you because they have not known Me nor My Father." Yet how patient He was! And if He needed patience, how much more do we! Our God is a "God of Patience," and God's man must be a man of patience too. We can understand the man who has no resting-place on Eternal Verities growing impatient and wild with ignorance, misunderstanding and rejection. To such a man the crass opposition and indifference of the world would be maddening.

S. John xv. 20.

But impatience of word and gesture does not

belong to those who are indwelt by Christ. It is easy, so fatally easy, to utter an impatient speech; and almost before we know what we are doing the word has sped out of our lips, some one has been hurt, and however deep may be the repentance and however sincere the forgiveness nothing can recall the word once spoken. It is a scientific fact that the sound waves that have been started by our impatient speech never spend themselves. They break on the shores of Eternity. I wonder whether we shall hear the very words we used, when we are spectators of our own lives at the last. The phonograph seems to say so. Nothing is lost. That which has been shall be. I do not like that! There are impatient speeches, that were weak and often intolerant; and unkind speeches that I have uttered, that I have grown quite ashamed of.

Sometimes a life is misunderstood, evil is read where evil is not intended, and ulterior motives are suspected where they do not exist. To be misunderstood, how terrible! And yet you cannot get people to understand you any sooner for getting angry with them, and showing your impatience. Look! God has put you where you are that you might by your consecrated individuality represent some thought of His, incarnate. "In patience possess ye your souls."

You are more likely to express that divine idea by patience than by impatience. It is grand to be able to wait. "Tarry ye the Lord's leisure." Yet even to a full-hearted optimist, God's work in the world seems so slow ; men seem so wedded to their narrowness, self seems so predominant, sensuous things so tyrannous and world embracing, that he is tempted (even while he knows the divine event to be surely approaching, even while he knows a God-purpose of everlasting love to underlie the world's existence) to cry, "Why are the wheels of His chariot so long in coming? will it ever come, that kingdom for which we work and pray?" And so we want to see God's work hastened, and we give way to impatience, and forget that God too sees the end from the beginning, and that after all God is God, and there can be but one Almighty Power. And is not this impatience again but undue self-assertion? Surely we can trust God's work to God. He can do without our hurry.

And leaving these larger world-ideas for the humbler sphere of home life, how the wondering eyes of our children, how the care-worn faces of our elders, seem to be full of a mute appeal for our loving patience! Be patient with us, *that* seems to make half the pathos of the human face. How full it is of expression, or half

expression, of a mystery of the upward struggle of something below! Surely the Great Father looking down upon the faces of His children must read the appeal for His Patience, though He need it not.

Who are we to deal out sharp and cutting speeches; to refuse the mute appeal for patience? Have we never needed the patience of another? Wherever there is real love there is patience. How the lives of little children are made sorrowful by impatience! Many a child has felt what injustice is because of the impatience of one in authority over it. It is a terrible blow too; for to the child's mind Authority is unquestionable, and when unquestionable authority errs impatiently, it is like some strong hand to which it clung with faith being suddenly snatched away.

> "Be patient with the young, for they
> Will have enough to bear.
> Pass through the world as best they may
> 'Tis full of anxious care."

And the aged no less than the young have a right to expect patience from us. That was a beautiful old Greek custom that made the young rise at the approach of the aged. It showed real reverence. It is true that their powers are slower, their eye lacks lustre sometimes, some-

times they enter that mysterious period of second childhood, when the physical powers outlive the mental, and their mind harks back to very ancient history, and the recent and present times are a hiatus to them. And they need the gentlest patience. There is something very pathetic in the feebleness of old age, that appeals to the noblest within us. They too have had their aspirations, their sorrows, their romance and their disappointments. Let us be patient with them. God forbid that we should deepen by a shadow the cloud that life has spread over them, or cause the most fleeting pain to them, by our impatience. We can all, and we all ought to be patient at home.

The lives of some are full of calls upon this patience, and the inconsideration of others is very trying. I wonder how some shop girls can endure the physical strain of standing for hours, day after day, from one end of the year to another! That strain is bad enough, and there is added to it a twofold inconsideration, as we have seen in certain cases, partly from their employers or their representatives, and partly from the ladies whom they serve. Yet we know of many whose patience has been a distinguishing grace which we have envied.

Sometimes the mistress of a home is greatly

tried. It is quite possible for a servant to be ungrateful and not care to please, nor to be thorough and dependable. Impatience will never remedy these defects; patience will, except in incorrigible cases.

Sometimes it is the servant who has to exercise this grace. On the part of mistresses the caprices, the fads, the unnecessary claims, the indifference to the spiritual or physical health of servants is terrible. Some mistresses use their maids as machines, never seem to recognise their common humanity. They know not and care not for the possibility of a very happy condition of things that might be, and ought to be between mistress and servant. Kindness, consideration, these are the things that make loving servants. Service from affection is the truest service. It is a marvel to see what some servants will bear patiently without a murmur. Remember that if you have one to wait on you and do your will, it is your duty and responsibility to see that her service is made endurable and even enjoyable.

If we would only remember it, the attitude of patience is a commanding attitude. It is the attitude of one who is not upset by trifles, who is confident in his cause, and who can afford to wait. There is profound philosophy to the spiritually-minded in that announcement of

Rom. v. 3. S. Paul's : "We glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience ; and patience experience, and experience hope : and hope maketh not ashamed : because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." It is a strange experience ; to the worldly, tribulation works anything but patience ; fretfulness, impatience, hastiness, if you like, but hardly patience. Yet S. Paul says that he *gloried* in tribulations, not in themselves, but for their work of patience, experience and hope. And he gives us the secret, namely that the Holy Spirit of God indwells the inmost being, and His work is to suffuse the Love of God throughout the whole nature.

It is only the Christian who can afford to wait. To him God has eternity in which to work, he can possess his soul in patience. Even about temporal matters this proverb has passed into current phraseology, "Everything comes to the man who can wait." How much more in the spiritual environment that enwraps and yet is concentric with the temporal and secular !

Some would seek to excuse their impatience by saying that it is all a matter of temperament, and that Patience is natural to one temperament and impossible to another. This is true to a limited

extent, but a very limited extent. One great truth holds temperament itself in its iron inevitable grasp. Use will develop dormant faculties, neglect will make them atrophy. What we call temperament is not necessarily a fixed quantity, it is capable of alteration, it is only a question of proportion of emotion-attributes. In one nature some attributes preponderate, in another others ; but in greater or less degree all the attributes exist in every nature, and life is given us not to be ruled by these, but to rule them. Thus the world is educative, a life-long process, and is given us as a school-term in our immortal being, a term in which to secure by slow but inerrant methods of daily duty, the true equilibrium of life. "Follow Patience." Patience is one of the emotion-attributes of our nature, and these are ruled by the will. If you determine to be patient you can be, and to aid your weakness in the stress of momentary strain there is another power stronger than yours within you as impelling life of your life, which makes for righteousness.

Have you ever thought of that title by which S. Paul calls our God, "The God of Patience"? Rom. xv 5.
He is really near you. It is only the veil of flesh that hides Him from you. His Spiritual Presence is the greatest reality in the world.

Impatient, you have thought Him slack. Recollectedness of that dear all-knowing, all-sympathizing, all-understanding Presence will kill the rising impatience. A mother's arms are a safe cradle for her little ones; but how safe a cradle for us do the Everlasting Arms of God our Father make! We never know all that God is waiting to be to us until we recognise that He is willing to take the care out of the little things of life. When we get away from the secret of His Presence in Jesus we forget ourselves and grow impatient. God is behind all the shadows of our life, as well as in the sunlight of it. Little child of God the Everlasting Father, run to Him Whose Love is the grave of impatience; brother of Jesus, obey the blessedly personal invitation of your loving Saviour, "Come unto Me and rest." From the midst of the ferment of impatience,

> "Speak to Him thou, for He hears, and spirit with spirit may meet,
> Nearer is He than breathing, and closer than hands and feet."

Do not think that He cannot be grieved by your mistrust, by your impetuous hurry. But an infinite pity and compassion mingles with His grief, as He watches you fretting and fussing and unnecessarily making yourself unhappy.

Unnecessarily, for a moment's recollection would remind you that He knows the end from the beginning, and that He and not chance directs your life. This life is not all, its beginnings are fulfilled otherwhere, in a fuller life.

> "For each and all of life,
> Whether its sphere be action, love or joy,
> There is fulfilment only otherwhere."

Yet this life is much indeed. It holds such splendid potentialities that might be developed by the strength of that invisible yet loving Presence. How to make the most of this life is not to be learned from the hedonist. It is only learned when life is deliberately and intentionally placed under the control of the ever present Saviour. He knows how to help us, but it is of no use for us to ask His direction and then try to direct ourselves. Yes, life is much, our relationships do not end this side of the grave, they only begin this side of what we call death. All their promise is fulfilled in Paradise. There are very few indeed who have none to be patient with, at home, or in friendship. It is this life that is our "chance of the prize of learning love."

There are so many wasted opportunities with some of us that might have been used if

only we had had patience! And this life is so short:—

"Why do we wait till ears are deaf
Before we speak our kindly word,
And only utter loving praise
When not a whisper can be heard?

"Why do we wait till hands are laid
Close-folded, pulseless, ere we place
Within them roses sweet and rare
And lilies in their flawless grace?

"Why do we wait till eyes are sealed
To light and love in death's deep trance,—
Dear wistful eyes—before we bend
Above them with impassioned glance?

"Why do we wait till hearts are still
To tell them all the love in ours,
And give them such late meed of praise,
And lay above them fragrant flowers?

"How oft we, careless, wait till life's
Sweet opportunities are past,
And break our alabaster box
Of ointment at the very last!

"Oh, let us heed the living friend
Who walks with us life's common ways,
Watching our eyes for look of love,
And hungering for a word of praise!"

The Divine, encompassing, embracing Presence is full of Patience with us, and if men are to take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus, we must get the secret of His patience from that ever accessible Presence.

CHAPTER XII

Perseverance

It is so hard to persevere, to keep on trying, when we have one lesson burned into us by experience in the past, that of our weakness. We have so often failed, and failed when we have tried so hard, and we are tempted to say with despair, "What is the good of trying? I may as well give up." And in the struggle upward and Godward, and the effort to bend our common life upward in response to the new direction of our spiritual nature, so much of the old taint and bias remains. Inclination rebels against duty, the pleasant against the right, the lower nature against the higher. And commonly it is not a question of progression at all; it is simply a question as to which will dominate, the lower or the higher, what S. Paul calls by the technical term, the *carnal*, or the spiritual.

But the persistent iteration of temptation by the lower, only proves that the higher nature is awakened. If it were not there would be no struggle, no imperious self-condemnation when we fail. It is just when we do not *remember*, that the faithless cry breaks from us, "It is of no use trying." Our failure, instead of making us despair, ought to drive us back upon the great basal fact of the Presence of Jesus. My failure is mine, my victory is His. I never know the blessedness of His Presence, or its safe retreat, until I turn with a dumb appeal for help to Him, from the midst of the clamorous solicitations of my inferior nature. S. Paul expresses this in his letter to the Romans: "Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." It is the secret of that Presence that teaches us never to despair, that assures to us with all our imperfections and besetments, the ultimate victory of our redeemed nature. It is the secret of His Presence that helps us to begin over again. The Christian in living communion with Christ does not know what defeat means; for defeat, instead of casting him into despair, is turned into an occasion of humble *beginning over again*. Ah, that is what we want, grace to begin over again.

Rom. vii 24, 25.

It is only thus that we can "rise on stepping stones of our dead selves to higher things." It is grace to persevere that we want. The Ideal of human life is ever with us, personally; to actualize it by daily self-conquest is the very object of this temporary phase of our immortal being; to ask for the grace that will enable us to "daily endeavour ourselves to follow the steps" of the blessed life. In temporal matters perfection and success are not attained *per saltum*. Gradual, slow, tedious climbing, hand over hand, with much sweat and terrible weariness, that is the apprenticeship a man has to undergo before he is permitted to wear the *toga virilis* of success.

> "The heights by great men reached and kept
> Were not attained by sudden flight,
> But they, while their companions slept,
> Were toiling upward through the night."

We see the result of all this midnight oil, painful study, grind, toil, weariness, and desperate struggle: the end is success; we want the end, but we do not want the inevitable preliminaries. We would have the success without the grind and toil and daily discipline, but that is simply impossible. Let us settle it for ever in our minds, that it is impossible. We have thought, perhaps, that we had genius, and we

have had very sore feelings because the world did not think so too. Perhaps the world was right, after all, and we were wrong. Let us give over moaning and begin working! "*Do* noble deeds, not *dream them* all day long." Keep the ideal ever before you, you will do nothing without it. True life is the effort to embody the ideal in concrete act. The ideal is no chimæra; it is just the ideal that *is*. The spiritual ideal is the Christ life, and the Christ life is a Presence ever with us. There is no noble inspiration, no lofty ideal, no enthusiasm for humanity, no ambition of goodness that does not issue forth from and point to Him. He is Ideal and inspiration; He may be known, personally; He *must*, if we are to hold communion with Him. "Of Him and to Him and by Him are all things" He is both Alpha and Omega of universal humanity as of the individual. Now what does all this mean with regard to our daily life? Has it any practical bearing upon our ordinary duties, or is it only a poetic mystical dream, vague to most men, attainable only by a few peculiarly constituted natures, that have leisure enough in this hurrying life to dream?

There is nothing so practical as the religion of Christ. It interpenetrates everyday life with

its demands, its guidance, its grace. You cannot put it on and off upon occasion. The reality of your religion is seen not so much perhaps in your distinctively religious *acts* as in the spirit and tone in which you set about your work, your everyday life, your business that seems to be extra-religious. Be sure that there is a God-purpose underlying your life, behind the counter, in the office, in the home. Only from this conviction will come that thoroughness which pleases God. If you do recognise this, your commonest duty will be done as part of a divinely appointed whole, the whole of your life will be viewed through a new medium. It will become sacramental. We often say that it is not so much the deeds, as the motives from which they spring, that make our lives good or bad. A bad deed may be done from a noble motive. It is what you *are* that determines your value ; and however imperfect and full of failure your life may be, if you *are* the child of the Everlasting, with your will lying along the plane of His Will, thinking His thoughts after Him, looking out on your life, the world, and your fellows, with His eyes ; eventually the external will be brought into harmony with the internal. Our life resembles that of the endogenous plant, it springs from within ; we grow

from within, outwards; our life is not a thing of accretion, but of development. Germinally our life is God's life. Every Christian man, in spite of the apparent contradiction of his imperfect sinful life, is germinally indwelt by God. This world resembles the pabulum in the seed upon which the germ feeds, the husk represents the limited condition of our humanity, and not until the food is absorbed and the germ has outgrown its limitations does the shell burst, and the new life upwork until it emerges into God's sunshine. Already ideally has the Archetypal Man taken our humanity to the Right Hand of the Father. That is the destiny of humanity foreshadowed and promised in the Ascension. To actualize it is your duty in this world of imperfection. The power by which it will be actualized is the power of the Divine
Phil. i. 21. Life within. "To me to live is Christ." By virtue of our living, corporate and yet individual union with Christ, there are divine potentialities and possibilities within us. "I
Phil. iv. 13. can do all things through Christ which strengthen-
1 Cor. vi. 19. eth me." Your bodies are "the Temple of the Holy Ghost," "know ye not your own
2 Cor. xiii. 5. selves that Jesus Christ is in you?" Now about the realizing of this. Men say "it is impossible!" With man it is, but if it be true

that you have ever with you the Presence of Jesus it is possible, and your duty as well as your privilege. No man was ever a worse man because he was a Christian ; a counterfeit Christianity may make a man a hypocrite ; but real Christianity means not absolute perfection in five minutes, but relative perfection through the media of struggle, defeat, aye, and sin. My dinner will not be spoiled because my cook is a Christian, my house is much less likely to be badly built if my builder *be*, not *seems* to be, only, a Christian. If about almost all true work there is a dash of individuality, so distinct that in some cases we can see the man in his work, and say with tolerable accuracy, "I know who did that, it is a bit of characteristic work ;" if a real worker puts a large piece of himself into his work, surely the Christian who is above all things *real*, simple and open, will not make a worse work, because the individuality he puts into his work will be consecrated.

You may think that the life of progress would be easy if it were always successful, if there were no failures, if we never overstepped the mark, if we never deviated from the right way. I am not so sure about that, and I am not so sure that we have the right to expect life to be *easy*. A wise man learns as much

from his failures as from his successes, and S. Paul said what is surely confirmed by the experience of Christ's followers, that we enter into life "through much tribulation." So, in some sense, failure is not only inevitable, but divinely permitted and over-ruled. The danger lies in the temptation to despair; in the temptation to utter the devil-suggested cry of desperation, "It is of no use trying, what is the good of it?" That is the devil's creed of pessimism. It *is* good trying! You have been struggling against some besetment and have been overthrown by it. Rise again and renew the fight. The man in union with Christ has the power of making endless beginnings; that is all he ever does in this world. When prone in the dust of defeat he yet flings the optimistic cry of defiance to his victor, "Wilt thou triumph over me, oh mine enemy?" Never give up! You may be beset by foes, the citadel of your nature may be invested by hostile enemies, and within there may lurk the traitorous foe of hereditary taint. One word of prayer, "Lord, open mine eyes!" and you will see that those who are for you are greater than those who are against you. To the God-opened eyes body-guards of angels are visible, and "all *is* right that seems most wrong." But if you despair

Acts xiv. 23.

you may as well give over at once. It is hope that will support you, hope that will give you joy, hope that will nerve you to fresh struggle against the lower nature. It is the certainty that in the fight between good and evil, the issue is already determined, that will make you an optimist. "Sin shall not have dominion over you." That seems a very large promise and a very long way off from us, does it not? But there it stands, a God-inspired utterance, if ever there was one.

Rom. vi 14.

If we would enlarge our views and take a wider sweep of life we might be helped. The struggle is not between me and sin. *I* in the highest sense (the complete I, the consecrated ego, the redeemed ego,) have no existence apart from the Secret Presence of my Lord. "Without Me, apart from Me, ye can do nothing," He said. So the responsibility is shifted from my shoulders to His. It is He, through me, who will and must overcome, and yet this magnificent truth makes it more incumbent on me than ever to lie open to be used by Him. It gives me the inspiration of that grand adage, "Noblesse oblige." I have only failed when I have forgotten that I am not alone in my fight, and have tried my infirm hand alone and been overcome. Our strength is to stand still.

S. John xv. 5.

Ex. xiv. 13. Rom. vi. 13.

"Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." "Yield your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Perseverance, because of the power within, greater than ours—trying again because we can do no other—is the true attitude. Success often grows out of failure. We are soldiers on active service, but our Captain is with us. Absolute reliance on His wisdom and absolute obedience to His command are the prime duties of those who wear His uniform. He has enlisted me. He has equipped me. He has given me plain orders. I can hear His distinct accents ringing out over the din of battle. My duty is clear. I am only responsible for doing that, however small it may be, a thing of standing still, a position to be maintained, a position to be captured, a retreat in order from some untenable position. He is in command. The issue of the great battle depends on Him, my faithfulness may help or hinder it, though my individual action cannot make or mar the result. Mine is an infinitesimal part in the great whole, and yet the victory of the whole depends upon the obedience of the individual unit. The integer in the great sum of humanity is the individual. God saves men separately, individually, one by one. He cares greatly for

the individual, and no unit is too insignificant for Him to care for. This is just where the personal element comes in. The Good Shepherd says, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." The living touch of the personal spirit on the great source of all spiritual life, on the person of the great blessed Presence of Jesus, gives us the secret of success, turns our failure into a rung of the ladder of achievement. Your identity is not *lost* in the whole of the Church of which you are a member in particular, any more than the separateness of the stones in a mighty temple is lost in the whole, each is necessary to the whole, and without each the whole would not be a whole. So eventually the success or failure of the Church in any age, her life or deadness, her spirituality or worldliness, her warmth or lukewarmness, depends, to a certain extent, upon the individual hold each member has spiritually upon the ever Present Lord, with, however, much allowed for the necessity of that honour of His name, and that Divine compassion and mercy which has made Him identify Himself with her, in spite of her unresponsiveness.

S. John x. 27.

You are then, as an individual, responsible for keeping in touch with Jesus, for constantly realizing His Presence. (The difficulty arises

from you, not from Him.) Definitely in the means of grace, notably and chiefly in the great Sacrament, but minutely in every tiny detail and circumstance of your most commonplace life, He has been waiting to communicate Himself to you, to be the strength and life of your life. You will never please Him until you open the avenues of your whole being to His ingress, until you are *filled* with His Spirit. When that happens you will *know*, though you may not always *feel*, what the God-directed life means, and you will rejoice in the Secret of His Presence. He will be more than an historic character to you, dim, vague, splendid, with the chiaroscuro of age-long veneration and adoration; He will be a friend and companion, communion with Whom will be the joy and strength of your life. Your very failures you will bring to Him and offer up as a sacrifice of love. The tenderest, closest personal intimacy with Him will be your present highest delight; a solid fact that not all the sorrows of failure can touch, that not all imaginable successes could create or merit. Life will be taken as it comes. You will not look for a crossless life, you will be His disciple, His learner, and you will cheerfully take up your cross even if it be the heavy cross of failure, daily, and follow Him, as "sorrowful

yet always rejoicing." If life be bare, it will only be so to outward seeming, for He is the Friend that never changes, and obscurity changes into dignity when He is with you, as He ever is. To know Him is to love Him, to serve Him, to have His constant care and companionship; upon occasion to open the floodgates of pent-up emotion in the Holy of Holies of Communion with Him, or to lie without a wish or thought in the calmer *ecstasis* of self-oblivion before His blessed embracing Presence, to rise and do your daily duty, to count no tiniest detail of life unimportant because you live for Him, as an expression of His Will and an organ of His manifestation,—this will give you the secret of perseverance. Never can we get away from Him; and because He is in us, and we are in Him, we shall endure as seeing Him Who is invisible. We can meet affront or misunderstanding with dignity, we can turn upon obloquy with a smile, we can repay evil with good, and meet the carking cares and harassments of daily life, all its fret and fuss and weariness with gentleness, strength and sweetness; joy will be multiplied because His Presence lies as the rose-heart of it. Sorrow will be cheerfully endured because in it we suffer with Him. We shall not know what defeat is,

2 Cor. vi. 10.

the unpleasantnesses of life will be sweetened by Him, and the surface storms and billows of trouble will sink to rest and His Peace fill the heart that is indwelt by Him. I will try again, I will never give up, I belong to Him, I will overcome, I can do all things through Christ Who has promised His Presence to be ever with me, even unto the end. As Whittier has beautifully written :—

"If there be some weaker one,
Give me strength to help him on ;
If a blinded soul there be,
Let me guide him nearer Thee.
Make my mortal dreams come true,
With the work I fain would do ;
Clothe with life the weak intent,
Let me be the thing I meant ;
Let me find in Thy employ
Peace that dearer is than joy ;
Out of self to love be led,
And to Heaven acclimated,
Until all things sweet and good
Seem my natural habitude."

CHAPTER XIII

PRAYER

It is the Secret of the Presence of Jesus that makes prayer possible as a conscious act of communion with God at any and every moment. It is a deliberate entrance of the human spirit into that Presence, that is true prayer; its entrance into that Presence Who is not far off, neither in Heaven nor in the deep, but nigh, the immanent *Logos*. Jesus took as the theme of a parable the truth that men ought always to pray and not to faint. And He not only told men to ask, seek, and knock, but Himself used prayer constantly—and even put into the mouths of His disciples the very words they were to use. You cannot live as He would have you without prayer, and the universal history of humanity shows that prayer is an instinct. There has never been a religion without prayer. And much

that is not prayer from your standpoint is real prayer from God's. For human need is the fount of prayer ; and where is the individual life that has never been oppressed by need ? Our need is the truest prayer, even though it pass not beyond an ill-defined sensation of spiritual lack or hunger into any definite wish, much less into a verbally expressed desire. We are not afraid of making too sweeping an assertion when we say that the irreligious pray—they would scorn the imputation, but it remains a fact.

The Blessed Life used it, how much more does my poor imperfect life need it ? Full of imperfections as I am, so ground under the tyranny of sense, so ignorant, so much the creature of lower impulses, and yet with the mysterious counter-gravitation of my regeneration attracting me, with the pulse and throb of divine impulse, sending my longing upward ; I find refuge and satisfaction in prayer, even in a vehicle of words, when my longing and needs are real. We plead for well-known words, and also a special place for prayer ; and yet the spirit of prayer is so much greater than its form, and prayer is an attitude of spirit rather than of body. Yet when I, under the impulse of volition, kneel and open my heart, is not this just an acknowledgment of the Presence ? I

should never kneel or utter another word of prayer if I were not satisfied that there was an ear and a heart to understand and answer. What a horrible mockery from which the heart recoils, if our prayers were but empty forms, lost in the bottomless void of irresponsive silence! If, instead of the living heart of the Everlasting Father, there were *nothing*! If there be one thing that the personal experience of needy men and women affirms, it is the value and power of prayer.

"No bounty of indulgent Heaven
The vague desire can stay:
Self-love is still a Tartar mill
For grinding prayers alway.

"The dear God hears and pities all;
He knoweth all our wants;
And what we blindly ask of Him
His love withholds or grants.

"And so I sometimes think our prayers
Might well be merged in one;
And nest and perch and hearth and church,
Repeat, 'Thy will be done.'"

J. G. WHITTIER.

It is so blessed to begin the day with God, and what a safeguard from unknown dangers that is! If, before I leave my room, I steep my soul in communion, spread out my unknown future before Him Who knows the end from

the beginning ; by an act of will, consecrate my life to be used by Him ; ask for the protection of that tender love that will lead me safely through all trial and sin ; that day may not be easy, may not even be happy, but it will be, what is far better, blessed. Yet we are sleepy in the morning, and too lazy to rise, are late and hurry through our prayers, with about as much real devotion in our spiritual attitude as there is gracefulness about a man who runs to catch a train, hindered by impedimenta. And there is danger too even about forms when they are improperly used ; their tendency is to reduce prayer to merely external mechanical words. God keep us from becoming mechanical, and our prayers from becoming automatic ! You may excuse the Calmuck Tartar his inscribed prayer-barrel driven by the wind, on the score of ignorance ; you cannot excuse one who knows the open Secret of the Ever-present Christ, on any score, for mechanical prayer. Reality is what we want, the Spirit-driven outpouring of the soul. Take away the mask of mechanical devotion, and lift your tear-wet and earnest faces, children of the Everlasting, to your Father's Face ! It is sweet to see a little child lift up its face for the benediction of a mother's kiss. Your morning prayer is the lifting up of

your heart to God that He may kiss it, and that day will be one of beatitude. You may get into trouble, you will most likely get very tired and weary during its hours, but you have been kissed by God, and there is no safeguard like God's embrace.

The very reality of prayer is lost by mere externalism. Miss the spirit and you have missed all ! You may kneel upon your knees, but if you do not prostrate your spirit, your prayer is simple hypocrisy.

We have heard prayers read before an assembled household so thoughtlessly, that mistakes were made which would have been impossible had the one praying given even common attention to the words he used ; and at such a rate that to most who were present, it was a physical impossibility to follow. It always seemed an unseemly scramble to get to the end, and was an outrage and degradation of the idea of prayer. One doubts whether such formal unreality is not worse than the rather common way of regarding prayer in some remote country districts, as a charm. There are hundreds of young agricultural labourers who say their prayers at night only because they are afraid lest something might happen to them in the dark, if they did not.

True prayer is the cry of the divine within us to the universally diffused divine without. It is bringing God into our lives, taking His counsel in our life. It is the child asking for His Father's direction and help, the sinner looking to his Great Saviour.

And you may press into the service of your prayer every power of your nature, your will, your intellect, your emotions, your senses. You *must* do this if you pray, and not only move your lips. And there are many helps in our nature, to reality in prayer. To take only one, the imagination. From vast wanderings in the infinite ocean of omnipresent Being, the mind retires weary and longing for something concrete, something more human. The weary sorrowful heart of man cries out for One like itself to love it and bless it and heal it, and lo, we get God, objectified, focussed, brought within the range of our little need, personified in Jesus, in Whom we recognise our Elder Brother, divinely human, humanly divine, full of sympathy, One Who has sounded all deeps of the abyss of human sorrow with the plumb-line of His Cross. Let your imagination dwell upon Him; picture before your mind the Lord Himself; quicken the picture until He no longer eludes you, the humanity of Him melt-

ing into the vastness of Deity, but the Deity visibly embodied within the limits of humanity, until He stands close before you in imagination, until you almost *see* Him. This is the consecrated use of the imagination that every one has, and it may be cultivated.

Here Art comes in with its great aid to devotion. If you know Him, there will be no danger that you will confuse your imagination with the Everlasting Reality; you will see behind, within, below your poor mental picture, the unutterable Vision of the present Christ Himself.

There are three actions of real prayer—on God, on the one who prays, and on others.

On God, for the Father surely is not uninterested in His children's cries. On the contrary, He is ever prompting us to speak to Him.

> "With us, for us, intercede,
> And with voiceless groaning plead
> Our unutterable need,
> Comforter Divine."

He is not an impassive stony silence, but a warm responsive Oversoul. God hears and God answers prayer. As Dean Vaughan has written: —"Prayer is not the synonym of petition. Prayer is speaking to God, whatsoever be the

voice, the language, the subject of discourse. Prayer is the soul's language in the Ear of a God known to be present. A man may pray who asks nothing, who but 'dwells in the secret place of the Most High,' a silent petition, counting it enough to abide under the shadow of the Almighty, the All-loving. The reality of prayer is the meeting of the two spirits, the 'I,' and the 'I AM,' unto communication, unto converse, unto interchange (with reverence be it spoken) of thought and speech, and life and love. Where this is, prayer is; though nothing be asked and nothing be given save that ineffable grace of the Divine Presence from which the earthly countenance shines, and men take knowledge of the man that he 'has been with Jesus.'"

It is by prayer that the human soul ascends into the Divine Purposes; prayer is the child's hand stretched up to God, and God grasps it and holds it strongly and lovingly. By prayer we place ourselves in touch with God.

But prayer also has an action on the one who prays, a reflex action. It is not "self-magnetization," for by virtue of its being the channel of communion with God, it changes our thoughts. One of the sweetest possibilities about a loving friend's sympathy is this, that it helps us to

unburden our trouble without reserve, and a trouble outpoured is nearly lost. So much more real is this when we recognise that it is Infinite Sympathy and Love to Whom we are praying. No tiny human sorrow is small to Him. It is His child who suffers, and the sorrow evaporates in the telling.

> "Tell him that his very longing is itself an answering cry,
> That his prayer, 'Come, gracious Allah,' is My answer, 'Here am I.'
> Every inmost aspiration is God's Angel undefiled,
> And in every 'O my Father' slumbers deep a 'Here, My child.'"

For think how often it has been experienced by you (and your experience is but confirmed by that of others), that before you prayed the burden of your desire was different. A change passed over it while you prayed. You began with one request, but it was never completed. Why? Because in prayer you put yourself in direct touch with God, and the result of that was that your prayer became, as true prayer always becomes, in harmony with God's Will,—"Not My Will but Thine be done." While in touch with the Mind of God you saw things through the medium of His Mind, looked through His Eyes, and that changed the current of your desire, and diverted your petitions into

harmony with His Will. Prayer of this character is always heard, it is prayer in the Spirit, Spirit-taught. For example; some temporal or physical trouble oppresses you. Pain of body or mind causes you to cry for deliverance from very weariness, "Why is my pain perpetual?" You make it a subject of prayer, that is, you get into touch with God, put yourself into contact with Him, and a new meaning is seen to underlie it. You look, perhaps, at it as S. Paul got to look on it, as chastisement, which is a proof of sonship; and the end of which is "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Remember how S. Paul thrice besought God to remove that "thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet him." God answered his prayer, not as he *wanted*, but as he *needed*. God's answer came to him—"My grace is sufficient for thee, for power is made perfect in weakness." We worry the Almighty Father with our foolish, ignorant and short-sighted wishes, instead of leaving Him to supply our needs. What we wish and what we need are so often opposite. We so frequently confound them. Yet every aspiration is a true prayer, and often in the evolution of the divine Will within us, it has to overcome the obstacles of ignorance, blindness, inertia, just as a living

2 Cor. xii. 9.

seed has to pierce clods of earth before it can fulfil its purpose. The normal condition would be one of continual prayer. At present it is spasmodic, embryonic, with much of self, limited and conditioned by our ignorance and stupidity. Yet the possession of this instinct points to its fulfilment.

One has written—"When, touched by the Divine Spirit, we rouse all the powers of our being to realize the Divine Presence as an overwhelming reality—not a cold faith in the mere existence of the Deity, but the conviction that He is the sublime reality, beside which all visible things are but as shadows,—that He is a Presence, nearer to us than friend or brother,—a Presence in actual contact with our spirit; then it is we feel the solemnity of asking. We are prone to think of God as enthroned in the far-off of Heaven: hence the little cares of life and the fascination of the visible crowd oust our perception of Him, and we are not roused into intense devotion. But if we once realize that there is no place where He is not; that everything is vital with His living energy, that He is as much in what we call small things as in great,—in the homes of men as in the depths of space; that He is close to us, 'compassing us behind and before,' and if, taking one step

further, we realize that by His Spirit He is specially nearer the praying soul—that His Divine Breath is quickening the prayer, while the Great Spirit waits to catch the voice ; that the prayer is the cry of His child, and that the Father, amid His universe, listens to the call ; if this be felt, must we not feel the solemnity of asking ? Is it possible *then*, to pray mechanically or formally ? Then the deeper meaning of prayer becomes unveiled, and under its glory we truly pray, for 'the Spirit helpeth our infirmity.' "

Half of our unbelief in prayer originates in our misconception of God's Heart. " He is too great to be troubled about my little cares." Take a microscope and look at the feathers on a butterfly's wing, or the waxen loveliness of a despised little wayside flower ; and see whether God is too great to care for perfection of beauty in the infinitely little. This ought to be a rebuke to us. It is the latent paganism in us that makes us doubt our Father's minute care. He knows, He loves, all is well. Ovid did not know God as we know Him in Jesus, so he might write " These cares are too small for the Celestial bosom." Jesus has said " Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered," and in the responsive thrill of love

with which I accept this Divine statement, I lose my cares, and life takes on new dignity and value.

The third action of prayer is its action upon others. This is the intercessory aspect of prayer. The heart that has learned the meaning of the Incarnation, has learned the brotherhood of man in a deeper sense of reality than as a mere phrase. "All ye are brethren." My joys and sorrows are not my own, they affect my brethren. The joys and sorrows of my brethren give them a claim upon me. The members of the body of God are not isolated units, theirs is the union of life, they are one body. Therefore it is that we are to rejoice with those that rejoice and weep with those that weep. I must have a hard selfish heart if I can see my blood relation, my spiritual brother suffer, and not care. And to outward seeming there is so little that we can do to help our friends in trouble. A perfect sympathy is a very rare thing. Yet, after all, our powerlessness may be only apparent. We can at all events make intercession for them ; in love spread out their troubles before the Eternal strength and sympathy. The sweetest service is that of intercession. "Brethren, pray for us" was an Apostolic desire.

"More deeds are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of,
Wherefore let your prayers
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep and goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer,
Both for themselves and those who call them friend.
For so the whole round world is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

It helps one in a difficult duty to know that the love of an earthly friend is really with him. How much more may it help a desolate or harassed traveller along the toilsome pathway of life to know that men who love him are lifting up holy hands for him ; that the faith of others is outpoured on his behalf. What nerve and confidence it will give him to know that there are those who are praying for him by name. Surely when in real prayer we rise into the atmosphere where God is all in all, we realize the Communion of Saints, to which living article of our faith there is no bar of time or space ; so that we may pray, "God bless them," though they are removed from the range of sense.

So we want to think that prayer is a spirit, an atmosphere to be ever breathed, not the jerky effort of a spasmodic spiritual nature ; but the aroma of life, the perfume that the soul-flowers in God's flower-garden spontaneously outbreathe.

Alas! that it is instead of this sometimes an effort which we are fertile in inventing excuses for omitting. Physical fatigue, laziness, lack of mood, absence of emotion, disinclination; these mean lack of love for God, lack of touch with the Infinite and Eternal; these mean that the true equilibrium of our being is disturbed, that the "corruptible body presseth down the soul," instead of the lower nature being dominated and interpenetrated by the spiritual nature. It is not hard for you to speak to one you love, and if it is distasteful for you to speak to God it is surely because you do not really love Him. If we do not love Him, it is because we have misjudged Him, for He is Love, and love begets love.

Day by day my appointed time here passes. Time is but an incident in the Eternity to which I belong, it is given me so that by means of my duties, failures, successes, all the uphill climb, all the strenuous fight of life, and all its wholesome discipline of pain and suffering, I may prepare for a higher service, freer from limitations, less hindered by conditions. I cannot do this alone, but the grace of the Everlasting Father Who put me here is waiting to enter into me in response to my need and prayer. The life of prayer is the life "within the shadow of the Almighty," it

is the life lived "in the hollow of His Hand." It is life safe "under His feathers." There may be long periods when I may not *feel* this, but I do far better than feel it, I *know* it. There is ever the safe shelter of His Presence into which I may retreat from a struggle too arduous for me, or from a self too strong for me. So, inasmuch as to put a need, an aspiration, a yearning into words, gives its reality and definiteness, I may lift up my heart ever to Him, I may use ejaculatory prayer, I may *think* prayer to Him Who "knoweth my thoughts afar off." And when most occupied with what we so trivially call mundane affairs, then, even then, shall my spirit look upward, like some flower to the sun, to God's face, to drink in light and life from that overshadowing loveliness. Thus I may turn all the world into a temple; the busy market, the crowded street, the monotonous office, the common home, these things will be beautified because in them I shall realize the nearness, closer than words can convey, of Him in Whom we live and move and have our being.

And when you are dead and cold, and no warm glow pervades your prayer, pray on, pray without ceasing; God is not deaf, though you may be cold; no prayer, however imperfect, however selfish or ignorant, is unanswered. We pray;

we leave God to answer ; we would not dictate the answer to Almighty Love ; we would not plead as though we would try and win what is now our present benediction, His Love. He answers every prayer I have ever put up ; and so many of those prayers He answers by not answering !

Therefore, in spite of my numbness, I will commune with Him ; and I will tell Him even of my coldness and offer it as a sacrifice to Him.

Love, that is the secret; prayer springs without thought from love. Your life is your truest prayer ; what you are and do, these show your prayers. If your life is love, your prayers will be prayer in the Holy Ghost, Who is the spirit of love. We are told that He makes intercession for us with unutterable groanings. Thank God, prayer is not a thing of choice words or retentive memory, but of love. A poor half idiotic boy had attended some Confirmation classes, but he could not remember the Catechism. The lesson he had perfectly one week was all forgotten the next. The other lads rather laughed at him, and his priest had doubts as to whether he should be presented to the Bishop. In a private interview he said, " I do not think that I ought to present you for Confirmation, John; you forget all the Catechism, and you do not

remember what I have told you. I think you had better wait." This fell like a terrible blow upon the lad, who lifted up his pathetic blue eyes, full of tears; and the corners of his weak mouth trembled as he said, "But, Father, I do love Jesus!" There was but one answer to that. But the sweet confession of faith came like an accusation to the heart of his priest, who could only ask himself, "Do I love Jesus like this simple child?"

If prayer be the atmosphere in which the spirit lives, it will be sure to find expression in outward acts of devotion, chiefest in that Divinely appointed trysting-place between human weakness and Divine Power, the Holy Communion.

Only let us beware of the creeping paralysis of mechanism about our prayers. Better far no form than no spirit. See and grasp and live in the spirit, that is the core and heart of prayer, and no one need miss it.

The Parable of the Lungs.

The lungs are a vital part of our body. By them we exhale the poison from our system and inhale the oxygen that purifies the blood; they are very delicate and can be injured; they are

subject to disease, their action is automatic, unconscious and continual. They cease to act, and the bodily machinery stops and dies. Exactly the same is it with prayer. The faculty and even the instinct of prayer is possessed by every one. It is a vital part of our spiritual nature. In communion with God we inhale the purifying grace and strength that keep us in spiritual health. And if, as we are told to do, we pray for our enemies, they will soon cease to be our enemies. If we pray for those whom we do not love, we shall soon love them; by doing this we are exhaling the poison of enmity and unkind thoughts from our nature. Prayer is a very delicate function and may easily be impaired by indifference, by other thoughts intruding, by coldness, and it can even become abused. But when we cease to pray our spiritual natures wither and atrophy. When I stop praying I stop living spiritually. The normal spiritual life is one continuous prayer, unconscious and spontaneous.

CHAPTER XIV

LOVE

To touch this great subject fills one with profound humility and sense of shortcoming. One is very like a little swallow skimming the surface of a bottomless and shoreless ocean, and bearing a tiny drop on its wings.

There seems to be a conspiracy on the part of those three inspired Apostles, SS. Peter, Paul, and John, to eulogize love, and the most magnificent language has been used to describe love. But neither S. Paul nor S. Peter attempt to define love ; it is only S. John, the Apostle of love, who defines it, and he gives a definition of it that startles us, "God is love." Love is God's essential being, not merely an attribute, but His essential being. How am I to know God? Only by love. If I love not, I may intellectually know about God, but I do not

know Him. The love of God is the source of all love. The great Heart of the All-loving is like the sunlight, vast enough to fill the solar system with heat and light, but broken up by the needs of individual flowers, each flower-cup being held up empty to be filled with life ; and though we have but limited capacities, still we can be full of the love-sunlight, the love-essence of God, and steeped and saturated with it.

Love is the explanation of Creation. If S. John's definition be true, that God is Love, God cannot be infinitely removed from us, "up beyond the shining of the farthest star," there can be no love in isolation. The Eternal Mind is not an everlasting blank, self-contained, self-satisfied. God thinks, and God's thoughts are love in expression, in manifestation, in self-utterance. The supreme and final self-projection and self-revelation of God is Jesus Christ. The mysterious movements of the great Heart of the Universe are hinted at in that magnificent prologue to S. John's Gospel and also in the proem to Genesis. "In the beginning God." God Who loves, God Who is loved, God Who is Love. Hence, in the beginning was the Word, the Reason, Who was God, Who was made flesh, Who dwelt among

us, Who became the author of Creation, Who tasted death with and for the creatures who sprang through Him; God recognised and identified Himself with His offspring. Every man carries within him a broken gleam of the Eternal Radiance, hidden, almost stifled, but still there, as the sole means whereby he can recognise His Divine origin, and respond to his Father's love. The nature of love is to give, to sacrifice itself; witness the humility of Jesus,

Phil. ii. 6-8. "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not a thing to be eagerly grasped to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." Here is God expressing Himself, Love in sacrifice, in self-utterance. To know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge is to be filled with all the fulness of God. And that love whose utterance and sacrifice even unto death took place once in time on the theatre of earth, is an eternal fact in the Heart of God. The overwhelming motive was love, for love is love's motive, the magnificent object was that purpose of the Eternal Love, Who will have all men to be saved, that

attunement of man's being to the rhythm of the eternal love-song. For the death of Jesus was only an incident in His work of love. And ideally it took place from the beginning. He is the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," and if we are saved by His death much more are we by His life. If we want to understand love we have to go back to the heart from which love springs. It is not a crucified Christ, it is a risen and ascended Christ Who is the centre of Christianity, *i.e.* of humanity at its highest. And yet the risen Christ has the Stigmata upon Him, that prove His unutterable love. And it is this Presence of One Who has personally descended into the lowest depths of sin and sorrow, Who is ever with us, none the less really because impalpable to the senses. And indeed we know much more about spiritual realities than about matter. I know more about my conscience than about matter, the innumerable details of which utterly baffle my lifelong study. And inasmuch as the only possible explanation that will at all help me to bear this strange life, is the belief that love is at the back of all things, and that somehow, somewhere, good shall be the final goal of ill; it matters much whether I believe rightly about God. "He that loveth not knoweth not God;

Apoc. xiii. 8.

Rom. v. 10.

1 John iv. 8. for God is love." Jesus, the Divine love conditioned by human flesh, is near me, always, ever, according to His promises, "I will not S. John xiv. 18. leave you orphans, I will come to you," "Lo, I S. Matt. xxviii. 20. am with you always, even unto the consummation of the ages." I enter the Presence of that unimaginable love when I come to Christ. Love is the origin; and love the end, and love the means. It is this that will make me an optimist; I can trust love even when I cannot quite see how it is going to act and overact, even when I am aware of questions for which I can find no adequate answer that will satisfy my reason. I can trust the Everlasting love, although I am forced to ask why are pain and evil allowed to exist in a world that is supposed to be ruled by a loving God. I can accept the pain and feel that there is a meaning in it, that love itself to me is not selfish happiness, but self-sacrifice, that even my imperfect and broken and "*stifled splendour and gloom*" of love is a dear dread, a bitter sweet. For surely the primal element of love is giving, not acquiring; love is not veiled selfishness, but utter self-giving in its real essence. I do not presume, with my imperfect education, my faulty logic of experience, my finite very limited capacity, to measure all things. I recognise the

limitations of the greatest human knowledge, and I acknowledge that there must be things that I can never fathom in my three score years and ten ; deep things and realities that I shall probably never sound in this state of existence. But this I do know, that love is a great solvent of difficulty : love teaches me a lore that is not learned in the Schools, love lets me see the Heart of God as a suffering God, One touched with a feeling of our infirmities, One Whom I can trust. The world is in making. Its golden age is to come when love shall be perfect. So I will face nature's mystery, I will face the presence of pain and sin, and yet trust.

It is in proportion to my contact with the living Presence of love eternal that my life will grow loving. I only live as I love. There is no other lesson, there is no other life, than that the little children of the Father should love one another. For love being the essential being of God, is indestructible. You cannot kill it, you may repress, wound, pain it, but it will not die. It is the only thing that lasts for ever. It is eternal and unfailing and ever "shining more and more unto the perfect day." Thank God that my life is not made up of my failures and sins, it is measured by my love and the sweet pain of its inevitable self-giving, its travail-

pangs of new birth. It is my love that lives, it is my love that is a consuming fire, ever living, never dying, burning up all my evil in its purifying blaze. In touch and contact with the Presence of the Eternal love, bathed in its fire-bath, what ought my life to be? Love has no beginning and no ending, as Mrs. Barrett Browning says in one of her most beautiful poems, "*They never loved who say, loved once.*" And yet the question that breaks in upon our betrayal, our unworthiness, as the Eyes of the Everlasting Love look upon us is, "Lovest thou Me?" It was not I who betrayed, it is I who can say in response from the bottom of my heart, "Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Then comes the command that puts our love to the test. "Feed My lambs; feed My sheep!" You cannot love Jesus and hide that love. It will show itself and in the tiniest details of your commerce with your fellows. Love-filled eyes take a deep and penetrating glance. Count Tolstoï in his book on "Life" makes family love grow out of the generous love of humanity. It ought to be put the other way; love is God within, the evolving power of the true self, the child-spirit that recognises its childhood and cries "Abba Father;" and through the simple en-

vironment of home relationships, that love that is too big to be limited by them, embraces here and there one, and finally loves all men as men, and man as man. Yes, if yours is the Christ-constrained life, your love will show itself to Him in others. A little boy once had a beautiful thought, that grew and deepened and broadened with his life, sweetening and uplifting it. It was but a childish fancy if you will, but it made a motive power in his experience. It was that Jesus visited the world in disguise, and chose the disguise of beggars and poor people and simple children ; and if a beggar asked an alms, or a dusty wayfarer a glass of water, he always gave it, for he might be ministering to Jesus under a strange disguise. And this love that serves Jesus in the persons of commonplace people is the thing that does His work in the world, that "fills up of His sufferings that remain," that "bears His Cross after Him." And it outflows because He is there, not in ecstasy, not in emotion, but steadily, serenely, with deep compelling influence, in life. After all, the secret of a loving life is simply that it lies open as a channel at both ends, the Godward end and the manward end. The love of Jesus flows into it, through all the means of grace, and the love of Jesus flows out of it through

the most insignificant duties of life. Love is the dynamic of life. The love-filled heart radiates love, and no tiniest deed of love is lost, no tiny word of love is lost. The only thing we have to do is to keep the channel
Jude 21. open, to "keep ourselves in the love of God," to be constrained by the love of Christ. And this means being a practical Christ's man, a Christopher. As Browning wrote, Life

> "Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love,
> How love might be, hath been indeed, and is."

As the Love Incarnate has said, our whole duty to God and man is love; you will never get beyond that. All the Sermon on the Mount may be summed up in that one little, mightiest word of all words, love, the love that will suffer and sacrifice, that thinks not of itself, but silently and divinely lavishes itself upon enemies, persecutors, the unloving, the narrow-minded. It is only love that can make us oblivious of self and generously mindful of others. And one little loving deed is worth more than all the words, all the eloquence, all the admiration, all the success in the world. And little loving deeds are within the reach of all for all. There is no one in the world who has not some idea, however inadequate, of what love is. There is

no child who may not have and show it, and even a cup of cold water given to one of Christ's little ones, shall not lose its reward. Sir Edwin Arnold, in the *Light of the World*, says :—

> "And for His Sake
> No more 'tis hard to love what He hath loved,
> Nor strange to tread in footmarks of His Feet,
> This path which leads, by love of man,—to where
> Through earthly service rendered, duties wrought
> In meekness, purity and charity,
> Always our Helper, He awaits—awaits
> To tell what best He knew—the secret deep,
> How the Divine hides in the undivine,
> How near to good is evil."

For love grows by exercise, the more love you give away the more you have, it is the only thing with absolutely no limitations about it, with the stamp of Eternity upon it. S. Christopher did a penitent's simple duty, but he served Christ ; S. Martin compassionated a beggar, but he clothed the Lord ; and the host of uncanonized Saints who make the salt of the earth, will say in wondering astonishment when the meaning "of their loving service" of God in the service of men is interpreted to them, "Lord, when saw we Thee and did this unto Thee?" and the King shall answer and say, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of one of these My brethren ye did it unto Me." Yet

how many of us lose this mighty chance and prize of love here and now! Thank God His Love for the unloving leaves no discipline undealt in order to arouse them. And the Presence of the Consuming Fire of love follows some into Hades, making them lift up their eyes even there, and awake from the sleep of selfishness to a loving thought, as was the case with Dives. It is not, oh brother, how many half crowns you give away from your superabundance, thereby earning reputation for benevolence, that shows your love; it is the God-life flowing through you that shows your love. You may give all your goods to feed the poor, and yet not have love. "Love is life, love is knowledge, love is salvation, to have love is to have Jesus, for Jesus is both giver and gift." It is just the lack of this that accounts for the dissatisfaction of the world. What it wants is love, love Who is waiting to fill and satisfy it, there is nothing else that can. *Ennui*, satiety, evanescence, dissatisfaction, follow all things else. Love never faileth, it is the miracle worker, it makes the unlovely lovely, it extracts good from evil, it makes pain and the mystery of life bearable, it makes the world God's house and men God's children. Without it life is not, there is only animal existence. Under the stress

and strain of duty, drink in the life of God. Lie back upon the Presence of Love ; He is there, in *all* your life, in its sins and failures as well as in its joys. Draw upon His Love.

"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue ; but in deed and in truth." 1 John iii. 18.

"Beloved, let us love one another : for love is of God ; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." 1 John iv. 7.

"If we love one another, God dwelleth in us." 1 John iv. 12.

And by love alone can we follow Jesus.

"Earth's Eldest Born,
But He, the only one of mortal birth
Who raised the veil and saw the Face behind,
While yet He wandered footsore on the earth,
Beheld the Father's Eyes,—that they were kind,
Here in the dark I grope, confused, purblind ;
I have not seen the glory and the peace ;
But on the darkened mirror of the mind
Strange glimmerings fall, and shake me till they cease.
Then, wondering, dazzled, on Thy Name I call,
And, like a child, reach empty hands and mourn,
And broken accents from my wild lips fall,
And I implore Thee in this human tone ;—
If such as I can follow Him at all
Into Thy Presence, 'tis by love alone."

R. BUCHANAN.

CHAPTER XV

PEACE

NINETEEN centuries ago Angels sang the first carol over the sleeping world, the burden of which was Glory to God, and on earth Peace. It was sung because the Babe Christ was born to be the Prince of Peace. It was a prophecy that the history of that Being hardly seemed to fulfil, nor the subsequent history of the Divine Society which He came to inaugurate, to an external observer. Yet the message of Peace is exactly what the world wants, as well as the individual. To-day the thunder of War is heard, to-day great and horrible massacres are made, to-day whole classes groan under hopeless and intolerable oppression ; to-day, nineteen centuries after the first Advent, class prejudice, hatred and suspicion are rife, even in our England that is a Christian country. Nation is afraid of nation,

Christian people of Christian people, the followers of the Prince of Peace have gigantic armies and navies, and are jealous and yet afraid of each other, and the world seems ever to drowse in an uneasy terror-haunted slumber over the volcano of war, which might belch forth its horrors and miseries at any moment. Within the Church too we see conflicting parties, hating each other with rancorous hate. The spirit that kindled the fires of Smithfield is still too vital at times, barely hidden by a thin veil of decency and external propriety. "Behold how these Christians love one another!" was the testimony of the unchristian world to the peace that covered the pristine Church with beauty. "Behold how these Christians hate one another!" is the well-deserved contemptuous judgment passed upon the Church by many an honest loving heart driven beyond the pale of religion by the inconsistencies of its professors. We do not excuse the action of the man who separates himself from the Church on this account. It seems unfair and unphilosophical to condemn a system for the sake of a few or even many who belong to it nominally, but whose lives are inconsistent with its precepts. The fault is not with the system, but with the individuals. It is the mere externalism within the Church, the loud profession

that is empty, the appearance without reality, that has disgusted many men, and made them think that it is better to break with an organisation that tolerates such inconsistencies. It is the formalism without life of the merely nominal Christian that has made men sceptics. Their scepticism is founded upon a somewhat weak power of discernment, it is not excusable, but it is to be laid at the door of these empty professors. *They* are the real infidels, and infidelity within the Church, the basal doctrine of which is faith, is an awful thing to contemplate. But, after all, one does not judge fairly by taking the worst specimens, and condemning religion because of them. You judge a thing, a religion, by what it *can* do, not by what it apparently does *not* do; and by the real Christian, who has not only the name to live, but who is thrilled and interpenetrated and consecrated by personal contact with the living Person, Christ, who makes Christianity, the mere externalist, whose religion is only a thing of mechanism and externals, is recognised as being in some sense a Christian perhaps, but not Christian. "They are not all Israel who are of Israel." A man may embrace the system of Christianity and yet not be a Christian. The Epistle of St. James has its trenchant message

for the Church to-day. He deals with partiality, duplicity, the abuse of speech, recriminations, wranglings, the habit of making inclination the law of life, lack of love, appearance without reality, mechanism without vitality. Religion is not a cloak but a life. "Where envying and strife is, there is tumult and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without wrangling and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." That is a very defective Christianity, the result of which is not peace in the individual and in the Society, deep unruffled peace in the secret of the Presence of the Indwelling Christ. And this peace, which is the solid possession of the man in union with his Lord, does not mean a dead monotony in which there is no change. Nor does it mean that the individual life shall be free from trouble or tribulation, for trial only proves the strength. But if you would learn the secret of peace, the sixteenth chapter of S. John is full of it.

S. James iii. 16–18.

Do you not know the sense of rest and peace that you feel when in the presence of certain calm souls? And if our unrest is quieted and our impatience hushed, and our sorrow comforted

by some serene earthly friend, how much more will the whole of our nature be brought under the fascination and dominion of that Presence Who is ever with us, of Him Who is our Peace; for *He*, not an idea; a Person, and *what* a Person, God and man, *He* is our Peace. His own words are, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Peace, it is what the world sadly wants, and it is the very message that forms the centre of the Gospel, and has sounded for nineteen centuries in the unlistening ears of men. The last time the Risen Body of our dear Lord was seen by human eyes was as He ascended up into Heaven, and a cloud received Him out of their sight; but as He was parted from them He lifted up His Hand in the attitude of benediction. Such has ever since been the work of Jesus, Who is always with us. God's benediction over the world is Peace, the peace of God.

S. John xiv. 27.

Peace! what a vague generality it is to most of us, what a fitting theme upon which the poetic gift may lavish its choicest sonnets, but how few know it more intimately than as an abstract idea! How few of us "let the peace of God rule" in our hearts and lives! How few of us have

peace with God, and rejoice in it as a personal possession ! It is where faith is.

Peace is balance ; peace is proportion ; peace is equilibrium, equipoise. Longfellow has sung :—

> " Our little life is kept in equipoise
> By opposite attractions and desires,
> The struggle of the instinct that enjoys
> With the more noble instinct that aspires."

It is balance we want ; to be ruled, and to rule because we are ruled ; to let Christ the Indweller take hold of our whole being, our personality, even our idiosyncrasies, and use them as the channel and means of His self-manifestation. We are not made by tendencies, not governed by bias or circumstances, we are ruled and made and governed by the Presence of Jesus. Circumstances will not necessarily be indifferent to us, but we, I, the real I, that is the I sunk and lost and incorporated into, and filled and used and indwelt by, Christ, the true *ego*, shall rule circumstances. At peace ! We so often use the words in connection with death of the body, instead of with life ruled and over-ruled by Jesus. Yet here and there a holy person, even in this conditioned phase of existence, " cabined, cribbed, confined," as it is, has risen into taking things as they come, as God's appointment, and has

met life with its ups and downs, its thrilling joys and bitter sorrows, successfully, because Jesus has been its very life. You can meet all life's experiences with Him, and if you have Him you will be emancipated from the tyranny of *things*, and your life will be peace. See what was S. Paul's experience, which he recounts in his Epistle to the Philippians : "I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased and how to abound ; everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." And earlier in the same chapter he counsels the Christians against that terrible tendency which is as keenly oppressive to-day as in the Philippian Church—the tendency to anticipate trouble, to run out of the present with careful anxiety into the future, to meet it before it comes. "Be careful for nothing," says he, "but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." See how it all centres around and emanates from the living Lord, Whose Presence is with us "alway." St. Paul's calm meeting of all the happenings of

Phil. iv. 12.

Phil. iv. 6.

life, as he tells us, was only possible, but was possible, through Christ Who strengthened him. Do not worry, trust. "Be not faithless but believing." Worry means absence of faith, surely, and why should we worry when there is always with us the abiding Presence of our loving Lord, from Whom we may get grace and power to meet every emergency as it arises? Recollectedness of His Presence, the consciousness of God ever in the ascendant, will lift us above that too justly sweeping condemnation,

"Man never is, but always to be blest."

Yes, that kingdom of God which is within you is the kingdom of peace. If you introduce discord, worry, fussy and faithless foreboding, you are disloyal to Him Whose sign of utter self-outpouring you bear upon your very body, and Whose invisible Presence has the right to rule in your spirit. While there is one lingering remnant of self-love, that kingdom is to that extent in rebellion against its lawful ruler and sovereign.

"Within yourselves deliverance must be sought,
Each man his prison makes."

SIR E. ARNOLD.

While one movement of rebellion, of self-assertion against the Divine Will is made, by that much the spirit of man is self-robbed of its

holiest dignity. Perfect peace only rules in the nature that is atoned, made at one, with the Will of God. "Thy Will not mine be done." Then, after the hardest lesson of utter selflessness, of utter submission to God has been learned, and put into action, and one wills to do His Will, comes peace. This surely is the lesson of the Gethsemane of Christ. And it is quite impossible to exaggerate the need of this absolute quiescent accord with God's Will. The very object of our life is to do His Will. See how this will lift you far above the power of things, into the serene spiritual atmosphere of peace. Things, conditions, cannot really affect us; the peaceful soul is indifferent to, because lifted above them, it lies serene in a Presence that utterly dominates it. And from the Secret of that Presence the man or woman can go forth in peace to meet whatever occurs. And some of the most beautiful songs of a faith and hope that have ever been sung have been outpoured from strange places. Listen to Madame Guyon singing in her prison in the Bastille :—

"A little bird I am,
Shut from the fields of air;
And in my cage I sit and sing
To Him Who placed me there;
Well-pleased a prisoner to be,
Because, my God, it pleaseth Thee.

"Nought have I else to do ;
I sing the whole day long ;
And He whom most I love to please,
Doth listen to my song ;
He caught and bound my wandering wing
But still He bends to hear me sing.

"Thou hast an ear to hear,
A heart to love and bless ;
And though my notes were e'er so rude,
Thou would'st not hear the less ;
Because Thou knowest as they fall,
That Love, sweet Love, inspires them all.

"My cage confines me round,
Abroad I cannot fly ;
But though my wing is closely bound,
My heart's at liberty.
My prison walls cannot control
The flight, the freedom of the soul.

"Oh, it is good to soar
These bolts and bars above,
To Him Whose purpose I adore,
Whose providence I love ;
And in Thy mighty Will to find
The joy, the freedom of the mind."

And God has had many caged birds who live in His Presence and sing their songs to Him. One day He will open the cage door for you and me. We know that, and yet are happy even in our captivity. Having Jesus, we have *all* we need for time and eternity.

The use of this sweet peace is that it quells fear. What wonder that the despairing undertone

of pessimism sounds in so much of our literature, when men have not the Peace that Jesus brings into the heart! Without His Presence what is there left to live for? We can be optimists and yet be keenly aware of heartbreak and sorrow and sin; we must be optimists if we have that Holy Real Presence within. And we do not deny that the circumstances of life need bravery, we only claim the power to meet them, by living above them, in the Eternal Presence, and the peace that Presence gives. "I will not care what man doeth unto me." "I know Whom I have believed." And so my peace no man, no thing, no happening, can disturb. Nothing can rob me of it. And going forth in that peace, I shall be brave. I have feud with no man, I cannot have feud with *things*. I love all men, my one desire is to be true to the Will of Him Whose man, whose bondslave I am. Fear does not exist with love, and Peace works hope, sure confidence and praise. Peace-keeping hearts, these are the hearts the world wants. Yet to the battlement and chaos of the world's shrieking chorus we so often add our petty selfish scream. Peace on earth, peace for an age of pessimism, of hurry, of competition, of the survival of the rudest, of praise, of fear, of unnatural mistrust; there is such peace, or the poetic dream of the

creature can improve vastly upon the idea and purpose of God.

But, oh ! how strong are the temptations to mistrust ! "The waves of the sea rage horribly, but yet the Lord Who sitteth on high is mightier." And when we look at the waves, like S. Peter, we begin to sink ; it is only when the Presence of Jesus fills our eyes that we are safe. He has not left us, though storms come ; but we so often leave Him out of account until the dangers threaten and the waves are like to ingulf us ; then we come to Him, and with faithless cries wake Him. When Jesus is with us we are safe. Would that we remembered that ! His Presence with us in the stress of the storm of life guarantees our safety. He can say, "Peace, be still !" How can we bless Him enough for being spiritually united to us ! It is life and peace, life more abundant and peace for evermore.

But it is not enough for us to be contented with the possession of Peace. All our blessings are only ours as a trust to be used for others. So, along with this vast privilege goes a vast responsibility. Ye know these things ; that is quite right, but you have to do them. You have got to be at peace with all men, you have no quarrel with any. If you have, you have no

business to have. You are a messenger of peace, the representative of the Prince of Peace. It may be hard, but it is not impossible, to "live peaceably with all men." You are contradicted, you are misjudged, you are unkindly treated! Well, so was Christ Who is within you. "Consider Him Who endured such contradiction of sinners, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds; ye have not yet resisted unto blood striving against sin." Jesus allows you something to bear for Him in life, as well as gives you everything to enjoy in His Presence. Remember that He has pronounced a beatitude upon the peacemakers. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." Well for us would it be if we allowed no day to be begun without our using as a prayer the "Veni Creator," without our invoking the Holy Spirit Who will "give peace at home."

Heb. xii. 3.

But we all need silence and retirement, for the purpose of going back to our duties full of peace. How few opportunities that are offered to us we use! A Quiet Day would tax our powers too heavily. To watch with Jesus for a few hours, when the world has so many years of our time, does not seem much, and yet we so rarely follow our Lord's example and retire alone. Back to the secret of His

Presence! Away from the clamour, the trial, the difficulty of life! Up to the mountain top of communion with Him, and the peace and quiet and silence of that immanent Presence shall distil upon us, and sink down into our deepest heart. Nothing but the peace of God can satisfy us. As Augustine said, "Tu nos fecisti ad Te, Domine, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in Te"—"Thou, O Lord, hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless till it find rest in Thee."

> "Peace, perfect peace, our future all unknown,
> Jesus we know, and He is on the Throne."

Surely a good test of the reality of any doctrine is the hold it has upon the simple in some time of stress. And the heroic fortitude and placid trust of many poor ignorant Christians, might bear a startling lesson of reality to some of us.

The Angelic Carol has not ceased. The tones yet linger, growing in a splendid crescendo to the full diapason, for the Presence of Jesus is the promise of Peace. Thou poor torn world, shattered and rent with war, made barren and thy loveliness debased into ugliness by the greed and self of man! Thou shalt be the abode of peace, renewed when that blessed Millennium

shall come, as it must, as it will; and peace, deep as the ocean, silent yet voiceful as the everlasting hills, shall hold thy sons in love with each other! At the creation the Spirit of God brooded over the face of the deep, in the new creation over the deep of humanity broods the Mother-Spirit of God.

CHAPTER XVI

INFLUENCE

THERE are many names by which we can speak of influence, but there is little explanation of what it is. We may call it—borrowing a term from science—magnetism, personal magnetism. It exists, and it is most potent both for good and ill. Every one has it, every one has felt its effects. Attractions, repulsions, who has not been swayed by them? These are the response or hostility of something within us, evoked by the presence of another. There seems to be an intuitional faculty in each of us, for which we can give no reason, and yet the dictates of which are nearly always reasonable, by which we discern sympathetic or antipathetic personalities. "I do not like So-and-So." "Why?" "Oh, I do not know, but I don't like him."

"I do not like you, Dr. Fell,
The reason why I cannot tell."

On the other hand, who has not come under the spell or fascination of others? A something has gone out of us to them, drawn out of us by the magic of their influence.

Influence is possessed by all of us, men, women and children, although we may not be aware of it; and perhaps unconscious influence is the most powerful. Some one wishes to form himself on us. We all have friends whom we have never known, those whose admiration and friendship have been silent and voiceless.

Yes, you and I are each surrounded by a zone, a charmed circle, and though we may not even open our lips as we pass down a street, we silently influence every one who enters the zone around us. Each person carries an atmosphere about with him, a power that radiates to the circumference of his surrounding circle.

And inasmuch as this influence may be for good or evil, what a solemn thing existence is!

Whether the effect of our influence be good or bad is not a matter of chance. It follows the great unalterable law, that like produces like. An evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit, nor a good tree corrupt fruit. "By their fruit shall ye know them." What I do reveals what I am, and it is what I am that tells and influences others. Men try to find excuses for themselves.

It is so easy to shift the blame on to heredity or imperfection. But it lies within the power of a man of evil influence to deliberately alter that influence to good. Here comes the power of the will. The brave direction and setting of man's will towards good is aided by the deliberate direct co-operation of the Spirit of Christ, the inward Comforter or Strengthener. When man's will is consecrated, sanctified, and confirmed by Christ, there is no limit to his good influence.

There are no rules that will produce influence. It can only come from being, that is, from life. And you can direct, but you cannot produce life by rules. You may make rules of holy living, but there must be the life first. God's influence then is the emanation of good life, good life is the result of a poor human personality, body, soul, and spirit, being indwelt by the good God. The inward Christ is the secret of fascination, the source and spring of all good influence. Incorporation into God, living by the Divine Indweller, explain the mystery of the attractiveness of many simple lives.

If your life is full of God, it will radiate God, and the influence will be God's influence. And the more a man consciously retires into the secret presence of Jesus, the more blessed will

be his power. We are only the instruments, it is Christ immanent in us Who is the power.

You cannot increase or exercise your influence by *trying* to influence others. It comes spontaneously. It is as one who takes pen, ink, and paper, and gives his thoughts to the world through the medium of writing. So God takes hold of our nature, and uses us as the means of writing some divine thought of His, by our lives, which are the medium, transmitting a message of love from the Divine Heart to others by means of us.

And after all, the operation of influence, though most potent, is silent. It is not so much by speech, nor by talking about it, as by example. Emerson epitomizes the speech of Socrates to Theages, who wished to be taught by him. "I have no system, I cannot be answerable for you. Quite above us, beyond the will of you or me is this secret affinity or repulsion laid. All my good is magnetic, and I educate, not by lessons, but by going about my business." (Emerson on Plato.) It is not by rules, but by example that we influence, not by precept, for the letter killeth, but by the Spirit, for the Spirit giveth life.

So again are we led within the circle to the centre of all life, the Inward Christ, "I in them

and they in Me ; " and mark the reason for this, " that the world may know then that Thou hast sent Me."

Jesus is the Life, the Light, your life and mine are the lanterns in and through which the Light shines. If you live your life in the flesh by the power of the Son of God, it will be full of the influence of the Son of God. Have we not felt the magnetism of the Cross on which the Divine Love supremely manifested itself? Have we not been among the " all men," *drawn* by that fascination to Him, and we have no life, no power, no influence apart from Him, and many can say without presumption and with simple truth, " To me to live is Christ." It would be presumption and untruth to lay claim to any life, any influence, in the true sense, apart from Him.

Get into and live in the Presence of Jesus, and let Him live in you if you want to help and bless others.

When influence is sweet and pure and strong, and there are not fatal barriers of reserve and aloofness ; here and there it compels attractively, sympathetically, some other lives, and thus friendships are made. It is said that a man can only have few friends. But believe that the only limit is your power of self-giving. The

beauty of true friendship is its power of giving, giving in love and thought and sacrifice. I do not try to make friends for the sake of what I can get out of them; my friends are made for me, and the beauty and sacredness of having them lies in my power of giving myself to and for them. You will have as many real friends as your heart is big. If it be large and deep and wide, there will be room for many. If narrow it will hold but few.

And the saying is true, "A man is known by the company he keeps." You can tell a man by his friends. You may gauge what his influence is by the people whom he attracts.

I must put in a word about friendship here. A friend is one of the grandest gifts that God can give. To have one whom I can trust, on whom I may outpour myself, is a sublime blessing. In my friend, God gives me a little bit of Himself. In loving and serving my friend I am loving and serving Him. And true friendship looks altogether deeper than externals; age has nothing to do with it, nor social position, nor even the culture that men call education. It is sympathy that leads each to each. A friendship is soul giving itself to soul, kindred of essential being asserting itself. I recognise relationship to and in my friend, a relationship

of common life in the deepest reality. The senses, the body, adventitious and accidental circumstance, are pressed into the sacrament of friendship ! and thus we feed our eyesight with a friend's glances, even while we recognise something deeper than we can define or interpret in them, they flow forth from some deep inmost being to us. Well have the eyes been called the windows of the soul. But it is not only and not chiefly the body of my friend that I love. It is sacred to me because it is the casket that holds the mysterious elusive friend I love and have never seen physically. Dear body, I love you, but you are only the wrapping and vesture of my friend whom not having seen I love. It is not difficult, this loving of the invisible.

Sir Thomas Browne writes in his *Religio Medici*, "There are wonders in true affection. It is a body of enigmas, mysteries and riddles ; wherein two so become one as they both become two. I love my friend before myself, and yet, methinks, I do not love him enough. Some few months hence my multiplied affection will make me believe I have never loved him at all. When I am from him I am dead till I be with him. United souls are not satisfied with embraces, but desire to be truly each other ; which, being impossible, their desires are infinite, and must

proceed without a possibility of satisfaction." And again, finding the basis of friendship in God, he says that "charity is the love of God for Whom we love our neighbour; for this I think charity, to love God for Himself, and our neighbour for God. All that is truly amiable is God, or as it were, a divided piece of Him that retains a reflex or shadow of Himself. Nor is it strange that we should place affection on that which is invisible; all that we truly love is this. What we adore under affection of our senses deserves not the honour of so pure a title . . . thus that part of our noble friends that we love is not that part that we embrace, but that insensible part that our arms cannot embrace."

The great enemy of effectual influence is reserve, a veil cast over it, an atmosphere that is characteristic of the Englishman, an unapproachableness; and these things often conceal an attractive spirit, if one only cares to take the trouble to get below the somewhat pachydermatous exterior. And it costs no small or painless effort for such a nature to show itself in its true character. Friendship with Jesus is the secret. We like to think that Universal Humanity found its Elder Brother, its Archetypal expression in Him. He loved to call Himself Son of Man. He was no Jew, but essentially cosmopolitan and

æonian. In His blessed life all material and temporal walls of partition between race and age are broken down, and man is complete in Him. His life in the individual is the life of God, and the presence of His life explains the magnetism of influence. Companionship with him makes life radiant, as with the three Apostles, S. Peter, S. James, and S. John, at the Transfiguration, who shared in the glory of that magnificent outbreaking of divinity through human flesh, and who coming down from the mountain beheld the sad crowd with its epileptic victim. The people seeing them, ran to them and saluted them. If you live in the Presence of Jesus, men will take knowledge of it, it is a fact that cannot be hidden. It will shine through your very features as the face of Moses shone when he came down from God. You see, friendship with Christ will give you true influence with men; will make your life, however limited, a power for good amongst your neighbours. We shall always betray the promise of our spiritual nature while we think the object for which we were put into this world is to *get* good instead of to *do* good by *being* good. Not pleasure, not happiness, but goodness to others is the noblest ambition.

I can give you no recipe for the production of Influence but this, "Abide under the shadow of

the Almighty," in the Presence of Christ. It is not the world's standard. The man in the street thinks you are vapouring wildly if you talk about this ; but in spite of his bondage to false standards and things, he has the spiritual capacity within him, however overlaid and atrophied. And the appeal of Jesus, and of the Jesus-life, is to the noblest in a man, the deep within him where God is, buried, overlaid, hidden, with the distortion of worldliness or the twist of purely conventional religion. God knows where to find it, that tender spot below the hardest exterior, but inasmuch as the method of God is to use the means at hand, He may choose to use you and your consecrated influence to reach it ; He may use the atmosphere around you, that radiates from His Presence within you, to awaken the sinner. Your voice attuned to and harmonized with the divine gospel of love may, albeit unconsciously, speak the magic words, the open sesame, that shall emancipate him from his unworthy enchantment with things temporal.

When I am in a flower-garden I never know which flowers I love the best. There is something within me that makes me love them all, they all appeal to and satisfy my instinct for the beautiful. Each is supremely good in its own particular way, from the modest violet, hiding

away under its broad leaves, unseen, but known to be there by its sweet scent, to the magnificent magnolia, waxen, lovely white queen among flowers, so regal and mystic and pure. And sometimes we think the great world-gardener, God, loves each of us His flowers equally ; the violet-life as well as the magnolia-life. Each exists to embody some divine thought, to be in its way the visible incarnation of a beauty of love within the Maker and Gardener's Bosom.

I walked up a deep Devonshire lane, between high hedges, once, and passed through a belt of lovely violet perfume that made the night-air exquisite. I said, "How beautiful that scent is," to my friend. "Yes," he said, "we always smell those violets, but we can never find them." How like some of God's modest flower-lives, sweetening the neighbourhood around them, unnoticed, undiscovered, even where their influence is most felt.

And another thing I have found in the course of visiting the aged sick, and that is that their power of influence is altogether independent of their intellectual or social position. Never shall I forget one visit : It was to an old sick woman who lived and was dying in one room in a crowded house. As I entered her door with the benediction, I was conscious of an atmo-

sphere I had entered before. One was there before me. The room was carpetless, and bare even of necessities, one rude oil daub hung over the little bed on which she lay. I went up and looked at her. Eighty years had written their history in a network of intersecting furrows upon her sweet old face. It was fringed about with a white nightcap, and an expression of heavenly trust and rest shone in it. What could I say to her? I, young, robust, with more than I deserved of this world's luxuries, to her, from whom death had taken all that made life worth living, who lived on half-a-crown a week, eked out, God knows how, by the sacred economies of honest and obscure poverty. I knew I could not tell her what she did not know; but I leaned over her and took her diaphanous hand, and said, "Dear old friend, *God knows.*" Everlasting youth and beauty were in the smile with which she answered, "I know He does, Sir. I could never have lived through my life without Him. Why, when my dear boy died," (with a faint motion of her hand to the picture,) "I thought I should have died too, for he was the best son mother ever had, and all his care was to keep want from me. I don't know what I should have done when God took him from me, that was three years

ago ; but He has been with me ever since ; and I just talk to Him, and thank Him for His daily mercies. He has given me so much to be thankful for." And I looked round the bare room ; and felt terribly ashamed of my petty ambitions. I had come to minister to her, and she had taught me a lesson of unselfishness, and trust, and the reality of the Presence of Jesus I shall never forget. Dear simple old saint, I learned far more from her than I could have taught her. She is now in the more immediate Presence of Him she leaned on here. God bless her for her lesson ! Martyrdom is grand, the influence of daily surrender to the blessed Will shown in many obscure lives of poverty is sublime. Oh ! it is not hard to shine for Jesus, if you live in hourly companionship with Him, you cannot help His shining through you in all sweet and helpful ways, silently, unconsciously. And it is not a thing to make us proud, to be used to help and cheer another. On the contrary, it is intensely humiliating. We have been ignorant of the fact, but God has been helping another through us. What can give such a chastened humility as that ? How must the man have felt who received this letter that I was privileged to see :— "The help and refreshment your words and your visit brought

are still with us, and I feel grateful to you. Kingsley's words on his deathbed, 'How beautiful God is!' sometimes recur to mind when we see God's servants." I should like a letter like that to be written to me.

The influence that Christ would have us exert is not limited to those who think as we do, or who are magnetically attracted by us, but He wishes us to help those who are opposed to or indifferent to us, or even who hate or ill-use us. He has given us the secret of the influential life, before which even persecutors, slanderers, and haters must bow, and that is Love and Prayer. Love—that means Jesus, God within, for God is Love. Any one can love those who love him. Prayer for them—that means drawing upon the Indwelling Love for our enemies. Any one can pray for those they love, ordinary people can do these things. But the Inward Christ means us not to be ordinary, but to be extraordinary. It is God's intent for you to transcend the power of the man of the world. If religion, if the Indwelling Christ, cannot make us better and more loving men and women, than the men and women of the world, they are no use.

Among those who have been admitted into this unpresumptuous intimacy with Christ as the life of their life, of course there is freemasonry.

By infallible signs they recognise and claim brotherhood, real spiritual brotherhood, they know they have life from a common source. It is not so much they who recognise each other, it is Christ Who recognises Christ.

You have the choice. Is your influence going to be that of an iceberg? Sailors crossing the Atlantic Ocean can tell the presence of icebergs long before they are visible. Down goes the thermometer, and the atmosphere grows icy cold; that is like some people's influence. You have to put on wrappings to protect you from them. There seems nothing attractive, nothing lovable about them. They are morose, self-contained, either from indifference or because they will not take the pains to interest you and to be interested in you. We have met men like this, from whom we have separated with a feeling of intense relief, and we never want to be near them again. That is what all of us shall become, unless we allow Jesus to make something nobler of our life and influence than we can make of it. God save us from that! We had rather be suns than refrigerators. That was a sweet saying we heard once from a poor bedridden woman who was speaking about the visit of a new curate to her, "Why, he came in like a sunbeam, and he left the sunshine behind

him." That is what our influence ought to be, may be, and what we want it to be when we are at our noblest. We have known people who not only had a restrictive influence upon our worst nature, but an inspiring influence upon our best nature. Pure, holy, filled with unselfish love, kindly, considerate, desirous of helping every one, it was not only impossible to think a mean thought or do an unworthy action in their presence, but it became necessary for us to do our best and be our truest, simply by force of their pure, ennobling influence. In lives like these we recognise the Divine humanity, and albeit they are but broken gleams of the Presence of Christ, they *are* gleams of that great central Sun of Righteousness, Who never arises in any soul without healing in His Wings.

And this is not at all accountable on the score of temperament. It is a question of contact with, constant direct touch upon the Presence of Christ, and that will work a far greater miracle than any resuscitation of a corpse: it will make the hateful man a loving man, the frivolous woman an earnest Sister of Mercy, the selfish nature unselfish and beautiful; and this is a miracle going on daily under our very eyes by the wonderful power of the inward Christ.

It is saturation with that Holy Spirit we want, for that is the secret of all true influence.

And we want enthusiasm, and that feeling which S. Paul expresses by the word "NECESSITY" to preach the Gospel. The enthusiasm of humanity that springs from faith in its Divine origin and in its Divine destiny is needed by us. For the God-touched eye looks not on the poor sinful man as he is, it sees him as he might become, as he needs your influence to help him to become. Mere benevolence or philanthropy will not help him. It has no panacea for the sin of the world, no anodyne for its misery, no opiate for its fever. It, with the best will in the world, seeing the wreck some poor wretch has made of his life, can only say, I am very sorry for you. It would only be torture to exalt an ideal of pure humanity before him, tied and bound with the chains of many sins, an abject slave in God's world. So we must have faith. We hold up the ideal and say to the sinner: *You* may become that from which you have fallen so far, you never can become like it of yourself, but the God Who made you, and the God Who redeemed you, is waiting to sanctify you. Let Him do in you what you can never hope to do yourself, make you a new man, give

you a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within you, in which you will see sin as an outrage on God's idea of your life, an insult to God's unwearied love, and a degradation of your humanity.

So my friend, we ask, what is your influence? Do children and old people love you? Are you able to charm the opponent hearts of men, can you exorcise the interloping devil that spoils your brother's life?

In every possible relationship of life, every one in the world exercises influence. Masters give the cue to those who who serve them, mistresses to maids, parents to children, and in how many a case has it been that a little child has influenced its parents.

It is said that Fénelon was full of this Christ-influence. When Lord Peterborough was asked what he thought of him, he said, "He is a delicious creature, but I was obliged to hurry away from him or he would have made me pious."

Would to God there were more men like Fénelon! The power may be yours, and may be effluent from you in saving grace. Remember the secret is to let the Presence of Christ manifest itself in your life. For you

to *live* in the highest sense, is Christ; and it is what you *are* that tells, and makes your influence.

How beautifully Browning portrays unconscious influence in his poem "Pippa Passes." Little Pippa, Italian silk-weaver, with one holiday in all the year, simple-hearted and pure, finds her holiday sunny and beautiful, and she trips up and down the hills, her happiness finding vent in a simple verse, the burden of which contains a magnificent faith in God. So she sings—

"God's in His heaven, All's well with the world."

Little does she know who hears her, but wildly passionate hearts hear her, those who plot evil hear her, the vile and wicked hear her; still she moves on untainted, and the zone of innocence and faith around her are a safeguard stronger than battlemented castle walls, and evil plans are frustrated, and repentance and remorse are evoked by that simple child-carol. "God's in His heaven, All's well with the world." Let us learn a lesson from the little silk-weaver; and trust and love and sing, and though holidays be few, and evil is around, at least *our* zone of influence shall be pure, and radiate with faith, as

in all, in joy as well as in sorrow, we *trust*. There is need in the night of sorrow for a song of faith. We may be like the nightingale, God's night-bird to charm the gloom with melody as we sing, "God's in His heaven, All's well with the world."

CHAPTER XVII

THE END CROWNS ALL

The end for which S. Paul counted all things but loss was that most excellent end of knowing Christ, the power of His Resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings. And to know God in Christ is the chief end of man, and to know Him is to love Him, and to love Him is to obey Him, and to obey Him issues in the consecration of every minutest detail of life. To be assured of the Presence of Christ, as Indweller, as Advocate, to feel that in our weakness and ignorance we have a Paraclete who makes intercession for us with unutterable pangs of love; to have these blessed truths as an abiding consciousness, this is the key of life. It is His Presence within us that makes the present bearable, yes, and prolific of good, in spite of all its failures and perplexity. And

yet, because of His Presence within we look forward, and we see that there is the strictest relationship of cause and effect between now and then, the present and the future. Now is the prophecy of then. His Presence within makes the now a little heaven, miniature of the vast and everlasting state of blessedness to which we are coming. So we can look on and up with hope, and our feet will haste and press forward. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." We "know only in part, we see through a glass, darkly," as yet. Limited is our knowledge, only hints and suggestions. Perfect knowledge will come with a perfect and unlimited and unconditioned state. We know too that this universal expectation of the whole creation points to its fulfilment in the manifestation of the sons of God.

1 John iii. 2.

1 Cor. xiii. 2.

As to our failures. May they not then be seen to be part of God's plan of education, part of God's success in us? As we have thought, the man who is instinct with the life and Presence of Christ, whose life is identified with Him, does not know what failure is. For him there is certainly no absolute failure, for

the strong life of God within works the miracle that S. Augustine speaks of, it turns a man's very sins and imperfections into rungs of the ladder up which he mounts to God. Failures, doubt, imperfections, these are only the Altar stairs of the spiritual life.

As to our friendships. Death so often seems to break the cords of love and put a period to our friendships just as they were most helpful to us. Yes, *seems*, for let us not believe it *does*. There, in that more perfect state to which we are coming by God's effectual grace, we shall find the place whither we go peopled with our friends, but I do not believe we have to wait till then, and pass the intervening time in sorrow and mourning. We do not believe in death, but in life, and death is to us but change of condition, the emancipative touch of God's finger. Death is really the gate of life, and if this be true, our friendship, if it be more than a tie of external things, if it have the seed-germ of immortality in it, is only deepened and enlarged, not ruined and killed. We have not yet fathomed the meaning of that article of our faith, the Communion of Saints, which we profess to believe. The Communion of Saints is a present reality, not a hint of something to come. "We believe in the communion of

saints" *now*, and that our dead are not lost to us, that their love for us is untouched by death; that our love for them can grow and increase in spite of their removal from physical sense and perception; that they can influence us, even if we cannot influence them. Essentially, spiritually, theirs and ours is one life, the life of God. And we do not mind the jeers of the sense-bound man, who only believes what he can see and touch, against what he is sure to call our unpractical dreaming. Certainly our dreams, if they be only such, are more valuable to us than his confined unbeautiful unbelief is to him. Moreover what we feel about the present influence of those whom we call the dead is, that it is something more than the backwater current of memory. That it is not only a vague remembrance, though even that is full of pathos, even if it be hopeless. Theirs is not the hopeless immortality of remembrance, for remembrance is not immortality, it dies with the mind that remembers. You remember the pathetic observation about his wife of a prominent metaphysician, "Her memory was to me a religion." A very poor hopeless religion. Far more beautiful is the simple legend upon a little square stone let into the wall of the North Cloister of Westminster Abbey, full as it is of

loving faith ; speaking of a living person, not a dead memory, "Jane Lester, deare childe." No one knows who she was, except that doubtless she was one of those who are ministering angels sent forth to minister to those who are heirs of salvation. We know so little of the capacities of an emancipated spirit. We know that matter makes no obstacle to their coming and going. We know, too, that they are interested in our course, that angelic joy is awakened by the repentance of a single sinner. We believe that they are far nearer to us than they were while in the isolation and confinement of the body. As Christina Rossetti sings in the last of her beautiful sonnets, "Later Life"—

"In life our absent friend is far away ;
But death may bring our friend exceeding near,
Show him familiar faces long so dear
And lead him back in reach of words we say.
He only cannot utter yea or nay
In any voice accustomed to our ear ;
He only cannot make his face appear
And turn the sun back on our shadowed day.
The dead may be around us, dear and dead ;
The unforgotten dearest dead may be
Watching us with unslumbering eyes and heart
Brimful of words that cannot yet be said,
Brimful of knowledge they may not impart,
Brimful of love for you and love for me."

We were very sorry for the old man whose

wife died suddenly, falling where she was. She dropped her handkerchief as she fell, and he had the square of carpet cut out on which it lay, and covered it with a shade of glass. We were sorry that he did not let his love go further. That he adored a thing, and forgot that the life of her he loved was not put out in the abysmal void of nothingness, but emancipated. As Richter so beautifully says, speaking of an old man who was immortal, and therefore could not be happy, "He was unhappy at the remembrance of earthly affections and dissevered hearts: for love is a plant which may *bud* in this life, but it must *flourish* in another." The Eternal life into which we must through much tribulation enter, is with us now in germ. And the person who is hide-bound and blinded by the infatuations of sense, laughs sardonically. "Eternal life in this circumscribed and imprisoned condition," says he. "Let me get a little happiness," (by which he means sense gratification,) "and I will be content, without yearning after the chimæra and elusive Proteus you call life." And yet we say that the Eternal life does begin here by union with Christ, in Whom we realize the Communion of Saints. I cannot give a mathematical demonstration of it, but I *know* it, and I dare to trust that instinct which I believe to

be the divine gift of faith. Read a parable from Jean Paul, "'Ah!' said the imprisoned bird, 'how unhappy were I in my eternal night, but for those melodious tones which sometimes make their way to me like beams of light from afar, and cheer my gloomy day. But I will myself repeat the heavenly melodies like an echo, until I have stamped them in my heart; and then I shall be able to bring comfort to myself in my darkness!' Thus spoke the little warbler, and somehow learned the sweet airs that were sung to it with voice and instrument. That done, the curtain was raised; for the darkness had been purposely continued to assist in its instruction. O man! how often dost thou complain of overshadowing grief and darkness resting upon thy days! And yet what cause for complaint, unless indeed thou hast failed to learn wisdom from suffering? For is not the whole sense of human life a veiling and an obscuring of the immortal spirit of man? *Then* first, when the fleshly curtain falls away, may it soar upwards into a region of happier melodies!"

We have sometimes been asked "But if our dear dead can *see* all we do, would it not make them unhappy?" We think not, for probably with their enlarged vision they can see the end,

the thread of divine purpose surely evolving in our lives, in spite of, perhaps helped by, our imperfections; because they know that the Presence of Christ is involved in our lives.

"Is it then lawful to pray for them? Why not? It depends upon your love and faith. If you believe in the Communion of Saints, prayer for them will be an instinct within you.

> "How can I cease to pray for thee? Somewhere
> In God's great Universe thou art to-day.
> Can He not reach thee with His tender care?
> Can He not hear me when for thee I pray?
> What matters it to Him, Who holds within
> The hollow of His Hand, all worlds, all space,
> That thou art done with earthly care and sin?
> Somewhere within His ken thou hast a place.
> Somewhere thou livest and hast need of Him.
> Somewhere thy soul sees higher heights to climb;
> And somewhere still there may be valleys dim
> That thou must pass to reach the hills sublime.
> Then all the more because thou canst not hear
> Poor human words of blessing, will I pray.
> Oh, true brave heart, God bless thee, wheresoe'er
> In His great Universe thou art to-day."

If you loved them you will find that your love is not affected, unless it be increased by the removal called death, otherwise it were not love for *them* but for *yourself* you felt.

Never can we forget the unrelieved sorrow upon the face of a young man who had lost his

mother, and who tried to tell us how hard he found it to leave her out of his prayers the night after she died.

But still it remains that during the interval between us and death no audible visible communion is possible between us and our dead; and we are hardly satisfied with the knowledge that they are round us; but necessarily hope for, and look forward to, the blessed time of re-union under similar conditions, when in a more perfect state the broken threads of friendship shall be gathered together again. Our hearts leap up at the thought of this. What will it be like when we wake up in the likeness of Him Whom having not seen we love? What an awaking! This is the night of shadows and dreams; that will be the morning that hath no evening, the day of substance and realities.

Yet to faith even here there are fore-gleams. Those whose dear eyes our fingers have closed are under promise to welcome us, and we go to them. The dead see clearly; there is no acting about death. We have stood by the deathbed of a poor woman whose hard life of toil was soon to end. She had been light-headed, and the last time we went to her, before we turned out the morbid neighbours who crowded her little

room, she said, "Is it Sunday morning?" They said, "She is only moithering, you know, Sir." Was she? It was the twilight dawn of her first day in Paradise, she was entering the Sabbatismos of God. The dying see farther than we do, for them the veil of sense is lifted a little in anticipation of its removal. And the end for the world is blessed also to those who have faith to believe that what God once pronounced very good must by His processes, however slow, reach His idea of it, purgatorially if you will, through Hades discipline if you will. What a good thing it is that Jesus is to be the judge, and not we! Good and yet awful; for Infinite, Immortal Love must be known before a man can form any adequate idea of the exceeding sinfulness of sin; and there can be no punishment so terrible as the punishment of Infinite Love. We need faith to dare to believe God, and God's purpose.

> "Our dear old world is but a child
> Yet in the go-cart. Patience, give it time
> To learn its limbs. There is a Hand that guides."

Love perfected! What a glorious consummation! Too many things come in to interrupt our love here. It was so feeble for our dear ones and for the Blessed Presence too. You

see, with clearer deeper vision there will be no misunderstanding in Paradise. How often have we felt that words formed so poor and futile an outlet for the surge of the well-nigh incommunicable thoughts that rose within us! May it not be that as very occasionally here, in a supreme friendship, thoughts have been understood and answered by one we love without a word passing, so in the more perfect condition of Paradise there may be other media of communication than articulate language? Even here we have felt the need of some higher mode of expression, that, to a certain very vague and limited extent, some music offers. It is so much more expressive than language. There are wordless songs that lift one up out of the sordid commonplace into a purer loftier atmosphere. We have felt just the same feeling as the little child expressed. She had been taken to Church, where she was told people went to worship God. Her little mind was full of wonder and awe at the thought of going into God's presence. After Church she was very silent, and when she got home she said to her mother, "Mother, I couldn't see God, but I heard His voice." Of course she had been awed by the unaccustomed music of the organ,—but was not God speaking to her through the music?

However, apart from æsthetics, here are you and I, in this life of limitations, free to a certain extent, doing our daily deeds, and by every word, thought and deed building our characters, which we carry with us into the unseen. Thank God death does not end all, death is the vestibule of a larger life. If, in spite of the negations of the soul, and the clamour of sense, we have known, and lived in, secret of the Presence of Jesus here, there we shall be closer to Him; Paradise holds so many of our dear ones, and above all it is one circle closer to Jesus, and with Him and them there, it will be no strange place, but have all that made home dear to us this side death. The end will be diviner than our dreams, for the end, as we foolishly call it, is only the beginning of a more perfect and tireless service of the Lord we loved and served so imperfectly here. And here are the shadows, while there is the reality from which these shadows are cast. As Carlyle writes of the ideas of that most ideal of idealists, Novalis, "For him the material creation is but an appearance, a typical shadow in which the Deity manifests Himself to man. Not only has the unseen world a reality, but the only reality; the rest being not metaphorically, but literally and in scientific strictness, 'a show.' The invisible

world is near us : or rather it is here, in us and about us ; were the fleshly coil removed from our soul, the glories of the Unseen were even now around us ; as the ancients fabled of the spheral music. Thus, not in words only, but in truth and sober belief, he feels himself encompassed by the Godhead ; feels in every thought, that in Him he lives, moves, and has his being."

And what comfort is there in realizing that it is only our finite time-bound perception that fails to recognise the God-intent wrapped up in many lives that have not only been obscure, but apparent failures here ; that have not seen the Presence of the Man of Sorrows, whose time-life was to outward seeming the sorriest, most pathetic failure ever made in this world, with them as Guide and Protector. So many men never appear to find their proper corner in the world, and die without finding it ; and the shores of time are strewn with the flotsam and jetsam of lives that have failed. Yet we believe that no life can really fail or be in vain, and that among the greatest revelations of the "world that sets this right" will be that which exhibits such lives in an altogether new light,—will be that which sets the last first and the first last. It is here that we see "through a glass, darkly." It is there that we shall see "face to face." When

we wake up in His Likeness we shall at last, and for the first time, *be satisfied.* And as for our childish sorrows, they are all known, they all subserve the end of love, our tears are put into His bottle, the very hairs of our head are all numbered. And as for our little doings, a cup of cold water will not be forgotten. It will be said by Him Whose slightest word of praise will make our being tingle with a thrill of pure happiness, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these My brethren ye did it unto Me." It is Love that crowns all. From God we came, in Him we live, to Him we hasten; to God, Who could do no more in the way of open self-revelation than come to us in the Person of Jesus Christ, to absolutely embrace and incorporate our humanity into Himself. He is the Head over all things, all else is but a dream. To have Him formed within is the meaning of life with its sorrows and joys, its unsatisfied yearnings and divine discontent. That we may "know Him and the power of His Resurrection" is to annihilate death, and triumph over the last enemy that shall be destroyed, by anticipation. To hold lightly by earth and firmly by His Hand is to begin Heaven on this side death; to be found in Him is to realize here and now the dignity of our redeemed humanity,

and to live in the spirit of recollectedness of our citizenship in Heaven. Already to the God-touched eyes the redness of morning shoots athwart the night of sense ; and when the young, nightless day arrives, the great sun of eternity will melt the body and dissolve the chains that bind us to earth, as the sun melts the mist-wreaths that lurk in the mountain valleys. "We shall see Him and be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

May the experience of our consecrated lives even here be found in those sweet words—

> "Higher than the highest heavens,
> Deeper than the deepest sea,
> Lord, Thy love at last has conquered :
> Grant me now my spirit's longing,
> None of self and all of Thee !"

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